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The Advent of the Father

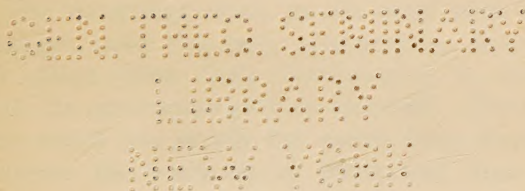
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The Advent of the Father

By
Archibald Allan, M.A.
Minister of Channelkirk



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PREFACE

FEW, we believe, will deny that the bypast years have brought profound, and it may be, permanent changes in the attitude of both Pulpit and Pew towards the Faith of the Fathers. Scientific research without, and Christian criticism within the pale of the Church have undoubtedly compelled a reconsideration of 'what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.'

The most important, as the most vital of these changes, and the one, presumably, from which all others draw their consequence, is concerned with the conception of God Himself. The distinction which has slowly but surely been emphasized between the teaching of Jesus and that of His followers, together with the many sub-distinctions set up between His and the teaching of the variously authenticated authorities of the Old and New Testaments, has steadily converged towards firmer resultant convictions regarding God's Personality, and what the Pulpit is to declare and the Pew is to understand concerning His Nature and Character.

That the Hebrew conception of God is not in

all respects identical with that revealed by Jesus is not more certain than that the former has, through the Preachers of the Gospel from St. Paul downwards, impressed itself upon the mind of the entire Christian world. The Doctrine, Discipline, Worship, and Government of the Church have consequently been rooted in, and nourished by it. The Hebrew conception of Deity, and all it carries with it, and not that of Jesus, has thereby dominated the whole realm of Christian vision and practice. This book starts from the conviction that it is this Hebrew domination, which meant thralldom to such as Carlyle, and the ascending illuminative power of the Paterpantheistic Ideal of Jesus, which are the true forces at work in the wide and varied theological controversies of our time. For if the Christian Religion be, next to life itself, the deepest working principle underlying Human History, and dependent primarily for its force and form on the conception of the Eternal Being out of which it springs, then it seems to follow that, when this God-Idea on which it rests becomes modified, and to an extent transformed and even renewed, the entire mental and moral potentiality of religion in man will also move towards a fresh expression of Faith and Life.

In the following chapters, the writer has attempted to realize for himself the Thought and Faith of Jesus from the Four Gospels, in order to reach, in the interests of his ministry, some certainty regarding His distinctive teaching concerning the Father-God and all human relationship towards Him.

The Text used is Westcott and Hort's Greek Testament, which differs in some readings from the Revised Version, but the latter may be regarded as the one quoted throughout the book.

The writer does not presume to address the theologically learned, but those only who may be found in any well-informed and intelligent congregation professing the Christian Religion. He hopes, moreover, to be excused if, in the interests of simplicity and clearness, he may have occasionally repeated ideas which seemed to him essential to his immediate line of thought.

The Reader will note that, notwithstanding modern criticism, the Fourth Gospel is made the fundamental authority in the work. For after all has been said, Dr. Percy Gardner's words can be accepted as true, when he writes, 'No one who does not want to rob his own soul of a great treasure will be willing on critical grounds to neglect or depreciate the glorious store of spiritual truth to be found in the Fourth Gospel. If we regard the Gospel with the eyes not of grudging criticism, but of generous appreciation and gratitude, the defects we have found in the author will seem but as spots in the sun' (*Historic View of the New Testament*, Lect. vi.). Prof. Schmiedel's view of the same Gospel is not without weight in this connection. 'No criticism,' he declares, 'ought to prevent us from recognising its historical value in correcting impressions derived from the Synoptic Gospels, and the epic power and dramatic irony with which it brings on the stage the characters and classes whereby the will of God is

being continuously fulfilled. . . . It often raises us above details of which the certitude will probably never be ascertained, into a region where we apprehend the nature and existence of a WORD OF LIFE, essentially the same in heaven and on earth, human yet divine, the incarnation of the concord of the spiritual universe. Yet, while no Gospel soars so high, none stands more firmly, more practically, below ' (*Encyc. Bib.*, 'Gospels,' § 63).

THE MANSE,
CHANNELKIRK, N.B.

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‘The essential, still awful and ever-blessed Fact of all that was meant by “God and the Godlike” to men’s souls is again struggling to become clearly revealed; will extricate itself from what some of us, too irreverently in our impatience, call “Hebrew old-clothes,” and will again bless the Nations; and heal them from their basenesses, and unendurable woes, and wanderings in the company of madness! This Fact lodges, not exclusively or specially in Hebrew Garnitures, Old or New, but in the Heart of Nature and of Man forevermore.’

CARLYLE, *Shooting Niagara*, sec. vi.

CHAPTER I.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

Two conceptions, like the two hemispheres of one world, complete the stupendous circle of Jesus' system of teaching. The first is the Father, the second is the Father's Kingdom. Whatever we find in the four Gospels, whatever is undeveloped and embryonic in the Old Testament, and expanded in the Apostolic literature of the New, moves within the boundaries of these two great generalizations. Neither can be put into a definition. We are only faintly conscious that the 'Name' declared by Jesus exhausts and surpasses all the conceptions of the Eternal Being in the past, and sets before the human race a new vision of His Personality for the future; and that the Kingdom of the 'Father,' of 'Heaven,' or of 'God,' means for mankind nothing less than a new heaven and a new earth. All personal relationship, and consequently all personal religion, is bound up in 'The Father,' and all morality, and all development of life and conduct, here and hereafter, is concluded in the Father's 'Kingdom.' Neither relationship begins; neither ends. Man only finds himself mysteriously

involved within them on rising to conscious existence. Jesus does not even hint at their origins. He simply declares that they are with us and within us. They are known, yet not fully known; they are come, yet not wholly come. 'I made known unto them Thy name,' He prays, but He also adds, 'and will make it known' (John xvii. 26). And while the Kingdom of Heaven is 'at hand,' it is also 'within' or 'in the midst of them,' though, again, He teaches men to pray 'Thy kingdom come,' as if it were still afar off.

In the mind of Jesus, the Father and His Kingdom seem allied to each other like substance and shadow. The Kingdom does not exist apart from its sovereign, as a separate entity, or as a realm that might possibly wait for the coming of its potentate. The Kingdom comes *with* the Father. His being and presence in man unfolds and reveals it. It comes forth out of Him. Hence it is a timeless thing, and has no horizons. Such spatial ideas as territory, empire, realm, or kingdom, as usually understood, are quite inept to describe it. All connotations, likewise, given in such words as king, reign, rule, law, are thoroughly misleading. The 'Kingdom of Heaven' can have no meaning to us, as Jesus means it, apart from His conception of God as 'The Father.' This is the thread that guides us through the labyrinth; the key that opens the 'everlasting doors.'

The 'Father' conception, indeed, is more than merely unifying, it bears in it a power of identity. The 'Father' may be regarded as God passive, and the 'Kingdom' as God active; the one as

representing God related to Himself, and the other as God related to man. Both conceptions are aspects of the Infinite Being, the One and Only; and the two terms, as summing up the highest ideals of men, are used by Jesus to incorporate for human thought and faith those fundamental facts of all relationship, absolute and finite, divine and mortal, which He lays down His entire life to reveal and maintain. As it is inevitable that man must think God, Jesus seems to desire that man should apprehend Him by those conceptual forms which are most profoundly imbedded in the facts and consciousness of the spirit of man, and best attested in universal creation and in human experience.

We shall assume in the following pages that the system of Jesus has been conceived and built up under the same human conditions to which all systems are subject, and which human nature and history assist in creating and developing. Jesus Himself does not encourage us to postulate other data than those which Time and the Soul of Man afford us. His 'Revelation' and 'Inspiration' do not come to Him by secret special messengers who traverse supernatural corridors and flit towards Him down aerial and mystic staircases. No angelic visitant whispers in His ear what He shall divulge of the mysteries of the eternal world. Man, to Jesus, is the Mystery, and His message. It is through Man that He knows the Father. His 'Revelation' is really proved Divine in that it has become Flesh. Nothing goes deeper than this. In His vision, God, the Incomprehensible, becomes

Father; the Father becomes the Son; the Son becomes the 'Son of Man,' the Child; the Spirit and Ideal of Man. It is a vision of the Descent of God; not, however, as by ladder from eternity into time, but by a slowly begotten earthly birth; not as suddenly flashing Himself through fleshly wrappings for an amazingly brief period, but as patiently waking up in the cradle of the enfolding million centuries to realize Himself a little human Child. This is the secret of Jesus, and His Revelation to the world. He clothes this fact of facts in human thought, and speaks the word 'Father'; and, again, He embodies it in human action, and calls it the 'Kingdom.' First, He seems to say, 'Be born,' and so know the 'Father'; then, 'Be ye perfect,' as the Father is perfect in His 'Kingdom'; that is, in His whole relationship to Man. Or, primarily, 'Be—a little child,' then 'Do—as a little child,' that ye may grow to the 'Father' in perfect relations with all His children. For, as Teufelsdröckh would say, 'Not what I Have, but what I Do is my Kingdom.'

But as Jesus leads us into this 'mystery' of the Father's Kingdom, we become thrilled by the shocks of violent antitheses. The powers of Chaos and Order seem once more aroused to create a new heaven and a new earth. This Kingdom is spiritual, yet it is earthly. It is within, yet it is without us. It is not of this world, yet we are to eat and drink in it, even to hilarious wedding feasting. It is, moreover, Jesus' kingdom, and yet He has no power in it, save what is delegated to Him. He cannot give the ambitious John and James a

place in it at His right and left hands (Mark x. 40). Neither does He rule there,—except by delegation. It is the Father's kingdom (Matthew vi. 9). But again, the Father is not King in it, but only Jesus (John xviii. 36, 37). And as this kingdom is not of this world, to what in the world can it be likened? Yet, without doubt, it has endless likeness to all things in the world, to the inanimate pearl, to the treasure in the field, to the net cast into the sea, and likewise to the king, the virgin, the householder, and the sower. It has kin with the vegetable world in the wheat and the tares, and with the world of Humanity in its various sections of the Family, the City, and the Kingdom. It is shrouded in 'mysteries,' but these are made known by parables which themselves are mystifying, and need to be interpreted (Matthew xiii. 13, 35, 36; John xvi. 29). It has come nigh unto men, yet they are urged to seek it. Jesus sends forth a company of His disciples to 'preach the kingdom of God,' yet He Himself groans as in despair of ever explaining it. 'Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God?' He cries (Luke xiii. 20). It is presumably holy, yet do not the vilest go into it? Again, all are called upon to enter it freely, as on unconditional terms, yet the one who simply looks back is not fit for it, the rich man can hardly crush through its contracted barriers, while from the days of John the Baptist there are those who force it. It was prepared from the foundation of the world, yet men are only called to 'inherit' it after they have passed the bar of the Last Judgment (Matthew xxv. 34). Strong

enough to survive the grave and time, it yet can be shut up against men by hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees (Matthew xxiii.).

The preaching of such a Kingdom under terms so distracting might easily lead to many confusions. When world-wandering currents encounter each other, the billows rush high into mountain heaps. And the Hebrew religion was, even in Jesus' day, a great deep of profound currential force, and the moral and spiritual power that opposed it must needs produce fundamental displacements and dislocations. There is good evidence that Jesus' immediate listeners failed completely to understand His meaning regarding the 'Kingdom of God.' He would scarcely have returned to this subject so iteratively, both by direct statement and parabolic utterance, if He had felt sure that it was a matter of clear comprehension to the intelligence of His disciples. On the contrary, astonishment, doubt, and scepticism characterised even that inner circle of His followers to the last of His earthly career. From the beginning of His ministry, open hostility was too apparent from the temple doctors, His own family and friends, and among the various influential and guiding bodies in state and synagogue. 'This is a hard saying,' 'He is beside Himself,' 'He hath a devil,' 'He is the Prince of devils' may be taken as a sample of statements which perhaps assailed His ears every day of His life. The Most High spoke from the cloud and said, 'This is my beloved Son, hear ye Him' (Mark ix. 7). The Son Himself repeatedly said, 'Who hath ears to hear, let him hear' (Mark iv. 9).

But His generation, in angry contempt and despair, said, 'Who can hear Him?' (John vi. 60). Both His conceptions of 'The Father' and of 'The Kingdom' to the last lay under dense clouds of misapprehension. Even on the night of His betrayal, after all He had taught them regarding the 'Father,' the Apostles found it possible to say, 'Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us!' How grossly His teaching of the 'Kingdom' was also warped and misconstrued in the public mind, is patent in the scenes connected with His apprehension, His arraignment before Pilate, and His Crucifixion. Indeed, the headlong, blind antagonism to Jesus which was so strongly shown on these occasions, drew its fiercest passion perhaps from His very teaching about the coming 'Kingdom,' and His claim to be a true King. Here both Jew and Roman found a common ground for His merciless repudiation. He seemed to lay a sacrilegious hand upon the Ark of both devotees. For to the Hebrew, a reigning, not a suffering Messiah was an expectation of the highest hope, while to every citizen of the Roman empire any seeming opposition to Caesar as a king was a crime of the deadliest degree. His race and time steadily ignored the new content of His meaning with reference to the 'Kingdom of Heaven,' and the seed He sowed did not spring into real strength and vigour until it was watered with His own blood.

It is only when we take our place, even after many centuries, by the side of the 'Father,' as Jesus understood that name, that the whole vast

panorama of this wonderful 'Kingdom' becomes a veritable vision of ordered power and beauty. For it is the Kingdom of Life, the Father's Life, earthly and everlasting. Unlike the 'Church,' it is not built. It comes. All its subjects must be children, for they are born into it, and born out of the Life of the Father. Only of such is this Kingdom. It is because Jesus Himself is a child that He is of the Father, and that, being the first perfected or 'begotten' child, He is first, or 'King' in the Father's Kingdom.

Hence, the Child is the only possible representative in it of both the Father and the Son. For 'Whosoever,' said Jesus, 'shall receive this little child in My name receiveth Me, and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me' (Luke ix. 48; Mark ix. 37). No spirit in this Kingdom stands above that of the child, and he that would 'offend' it rashly runs the risks of the millstone and the deep sea. Therefore the child is the greatest in this Kingdom, and except men become as little children they cannot enter into it. And this is the reason why they must be born into it. It is not a king's, but a Father's Kingdom. (Matthew vi. 9, 10; xiii. 43; xxvi. 29).

In theological treatises this Kingdom is commonly defined from the ethical standpoint. We give a few examples. 'The Kingdom of God,' according to Ritschl, as interpreted by Prof. Garvie, 'is the *highest good* which God realizes in men, and at the same time their common *task*, as the dominion of God only exists in the rendering of obedience by men' (*Hib. Jour.*, July, 1905,

p. 837). Harnack declares that the Kingdom of God is the 'sovereignty of God, the sovereignty of the good and the holy' (*What is Christianity?* 3rd Edition, p. 47). He avers again that 'The Kingdom of God is the rule of God; but it is the rule of the holy God in the hearts of individuals; it is God Himself in His power' (*Ibid.*, p. 57). Harnack equates God's presence in the soul with His 'power.'

'The kingdom of heaven is at hand,' says Prof. Ed. Caird, meant 'that right was now at length to show itself as might; that the deliverance from evils within and without, which had been longed for but hardly expected, except in some dim future or in another world, was already at the door. It awakened the hope of a triumph of good' (*Evolution of Religion*, Vol. II., p. 98).

The 'Kingdom of God' is thus defined as *Goodness and Government*. It is known by its fruits and not by its roots. Now Jesus appears to us to aim first of all at expressing His conception of the Kingdom by its root elements. And with the highest respect for the above gifted writers, it does not appear that He ever puts the Kingdom of God, *primarily*, within the terms used of either 'religion' or 'morality,' as these are understood. He appeals to reality, not to abstraction. Conclusively, throughout both His didactic and parabolic methods of teaching, He endeavours to reveal a distinct relationship which unites the soul of man to God; but this relationship is not strictly a 'religious' or 'moral' one, as a *primary* fact; and, therefore, to be interpreted by the language

of religion and morality. Fundamentally, we cannot speak of this relationship as existing between 'God and the soul' (terms which connote the unknown, and reveal nothing to us), but as one between the Father and His child. First and foremost, *Jesus sets forth the Kingdom of God in terms of Life*; and in doing so, He really transcends the realms of religion and morality, and confirms to man that fundamental life-relationship between the Eternal Being and His creature which makes a subsequent spiritual and moral relationship possible. He defines His 'Kingdom' by the Life-Giver, and Life itself, and not by qualities which merely characterise something alive. Ultimately, of course, the 'Kingdom' in its development embraces man's 'highest good,' and all that can be included in 'duty,' but to Jesus, His Kingdom is not primarily preached by Himself as the Kingdom of 'Good' or of 'Goodness,' of 'rule' or 'of power,' but of 'God,' of 'the Father,' and 'of Heaven,' each of which expressions He elsewhere equates with Life, and 'eternal life.' And just as we have experience of God in the life which He gives before we have any knowledge of Him, so also our experience of this Kingdom of God and of the Father antecedes all 'religion' and 'morality,' built up in it, latterly, through that Life which He has bestowed upon all.

It is in this concrete fundamental of life that Jesus unifies all that is afterwards believable of the 'highest good,' and also all that is possible in man's common '*task of human duty.*' 'Religion' and 'morality,' as we understand these,

are never, to Jesus, integral parts of His message. He thinks principally of life, and how man is to attain to its possession. Life once given, He assumes that religion and systems of morals will then evolve and develop out of life in their natural way of growth under the varied influences which affect universal humanity. Jesus never even hints that He is come that man might have 'religion' and 'morals,' but He does declare emphatically that He is come that man might have Life. His Word of the 'Kingdom' is, therefore, the Word of Life.

Accordingly, what seems to be constantly in the mind of Jesus is not so much God's 'rule,' or His 'sovereignty,' or man's highest 'good,' though these naturally emerge out of the sphere included in man's spiritual instincts, but *the new life* which will give to God's 'rule' and 'sovereignty' and to man's 'highest good' a concrete relationship and a more exalted meaning. Moreover, all such expressions, while suffering from the malady of abstraction, and, so, unhealthily apart from the concrete method of Jesus, fail to connote Fatherhood and the necessity for the new birth. They may assert the functions of a God, as Godhood has been conceived in the past, but they do not declare 'the Father.' We should never know from them that God was 'Father' to us at all. This would be fatal, in the view of Jesus.

For to make known 'the Father' is the prime purpose of Jesus' mission to this world. His system stands or falls with this purpose. It is the foundation, as it is the coping stone of the

religion He has built in the beings of Man and the Eternal. For Fatherhood in Jesus' system is not a mere attribute of God. Fatherhood is the All that God is to Man. We do not know God in any real and vital sense except through the Life He gives us; that is to say, through His Fatherhood. It is not a sentiment, a mere capacity in the Eternal for being benevolent, mighty, just, good, kind, and loving. It is the Fact upon which all other facts of existence depend. To Jesus it is the test-fact of all reality. If we do not know the Father, we know nothing. We certainly know not Jesus. There is no Christianity outside of this Fatherhood.

Notwithstanding, it is too sadly true that Christendom has in the past attached but a feeble value to this fact of God's Fatherhood. It is profoundly in eclipse even in the Apostolic writings. It is a non-essential in the doctrinal schemes of Paul, Augustine, and the Reformers. To Irenaeus and Origen we owe, perhaps, its devotional influence in the Early Church at all. The former, as one has said, 'is the teacher, above all others, of the Fatherhood of God,' although, to us, it must be evident now, that as his God is more of a Creator than a Father, and his Christ more of a Logos than a Son, the kernel of God's Fatherhood is never really touched by him. Concerning Origen, Harnack says, 'Origen was the first among the Fathers (though before him Marcion) to recognise that the decisive advance beyond the Old Testament stage of religion was given in the preaching of God as Father' (*Hist.*

of Dog., I., 65). But there is not wanting evidence in his case also that though he viewed the Son as 'the same in substance with the Father,' he yet found the unity of Father and Son in 'feeling and in will,' rather than in Life (c. Cels. viii. 12).

In no case does it appear that the Fatherhood of God was vital to the Faith of Christendom at any period. Her Formulas, Symbols, or Creeds have a dim and fleeting consciousness of it, but it is never made the test of the Faith, of membership in the Church, or of the Nature and Character of God. The Christ, but not the Father, has all along been the central passion of the Christian world. The Church has fixed her ecstatic gaze on the Cross of Blood, but not upon the Face of the Father. Calvary, not Heaven, has been the ultimate object of her vision. The grand purpose, likewise, of Christ's coming, as an Incarnation of God, was, she has believed, and strenuously declared, to remove sin, and to 'finish' this work.

But Jesus makes it His meat and His drink to carry all eyes beyond Himself to rest on the Father. He is but the 'Word' which is sent to reveal the Father, to unveil Him and to make Him known. This He declares to be His 'Work' (John xvii. 4, 25, 26).

The fact that God has given Life, and is, therefore, 'OUR FATHER,' has never had any genuine moral force or value in the promulgation of the central faith of Jesus. It may have appeared to the Church that the Father conception brought the Godhead too near the level of Nature; and, of course, everything that was 'natural' was held as

'enmity against God.' To the Hebrew mind, also, all the associations of begetting and bearing life connoted uncleanness and unholiness, and, as such, to be abhorred in every statement of the attributes of Deity. The Jewish prejudices of the Apostles and the Paulinists of the Early Church were thus led instinctively to abjure the Fatherhood as a basis of the forgiveness of sin, and to prefer the Resurrection and that conception of washing by blood which was ingrained in the faith of all the ancient peoples. The Christian Church, accordingly, has never taken Jesus down from the Cross, where the Jewish religion nailed Him, for her faith for salvation has been placed not in the Father whom He revealed in His life, but in the virtue which flowed from His own personal acts, and from His own individual sufferings.

But it is on this great and all-important concrete fact of Father-Life that Jesus centres His entire system of Doctrine, and corroborates throughout by His own Word and Example. The fact that He is a Child is to Him the only proof that God is His Father; and, indeed, there is no other proof possible, unless one of mere sentimentality.

Moreover, Jesus discerns that He has come, not primarily to forgive sin, but to give new life; not to wipe out stains, but to give the Father's life to man, a life which He Himself had received from the Father (John v. 26). It is not merely to abolish guilt, but to impart a new existence, and thereby save the world through its possession of the Father.

The problem thus centres in Life, as it humbly appears to us; in the Life of the Father, which

finds realm and flow in the Life of Jesus, and in the life of man, here and hereafter. This is the foundation element in the 'Kingdom' which Jesus labours to proclaim to the world. No doubt John the Baptist also had a conception of the 'Kingdom of God' in his desert announcements, but it is evident that it was one which was entirely bounded by ethical and religious concomitants, and had little or nothing to do with a substantive element of existence which might justly be called a new birth.

Jesus, then, takes upon His lips the two great words 'Father' and 'Kingdom.' The latter seems to have no true meaning without the former, and, certainly, 'Father' has no meaning without the conception of 'Life,' out of which, perhaps, it originally springs. May we venture to ask, then, why He selected this word 'Father' and no other name as the one name for the Infinite Being? He practically omits from His teaching the God-words of the Old Testament, such as 'Yahwé Elohim,' 'I am,' and many others. He does indeed, on certain occasions, refer to these appellations of the Hebrew Deity, but only as a concession to those who have thrust this Deity's oracles upon Him with sinister purpose, as in the Temptation narratives; or when the local authority of this Deity's name is the only instrument available to Him, as a referendum, as in the Sadducean argument concerning the Resurrection (Matt. xxii.). It is almost assured to us that He never mentioned this Deity's name in prayer. "Abba," "Father," was the form of address to God in prayer which was peculiar to

Jesus.' 'Jesus never, as it seems, addressed God in prayer as "My Father in heaven," but only as "My Father"' (*Words of Jesus*, pp. 198, 191, Dalman. Kay's Trns.). And even if we admit that Jesus omitted the names of the Old Testament Deity for the same reason that in His day they were universally omitted in speech, it is evident that He yet had a Deity to reveal who could not be expressed by these God-words. We may easily accept that He found the 'Father'-name in the popular use of His day. Perhaps we should at once admit that it must have been a latency in the human mind through all ages. But the fact that He completely shuts Himself up to the use of this 'Father'-name for God, is a proof that He was convinced that only this name could possibly teach the world the great Truth about the Eternal Being which He sought to impress upon it. His impassioned apostrophe, 'O righteous Father, *the world knew Thee not, but I knew Thee*,' is so absolute as almost to deny truth to every 'Name' of God preceding His own advent in history.

Now, it will hardly be disputed that the 'Father'-name universally rests upon the fact of communicated life. In the sphere of philology, of course, its connotations are numerous; and, in its historical uses, the particular idea expressed by it is various, but it will be found that if the principle of life-giving is entirely excluded from it, there is no other word which can be substituted for it which gives at once Personality, and Personality as the source of Life. Men may love, rule, judge, counsel, guide, provide, reign; they may be lords,

saviours, warriors, kings, lawgivers, and fulfil an incomputable myriad of functions, but to give life is the function of a father alone. This is the supreme claim to fatherhood; and the necessity of the fact for understanding Jesus' meaning in His use of the 'Father'-name for God, must be our excuse for asserting it so plainly. Nothing, perhaps, that Jesus has inculcated upon human faith and intelligence transcends this 'Father'-fact in absolute importance. All the power wrapt up in His own Person and Doctrine; all that His Life and Death mean to mankind, sicken and wilt exceedingly if His conception of the Great God as the 'Father,' the Giver of personal life, and of personality in that life, be deleted from His system. 'He takes up the attitude of a child towards Him, and loves best to call Him the Heavenly Father.' 'He first knows Himself, not in emotion, but in sober quietness, to be God's Child; before Him no one ever felt himself to be so, or called himself so. He is the first-born of the Father' (Wellhausen's *Israel*, 511, Eng. Trans. A. & C. Black, 1885).

It is, indeed, on the basis of this fact that Jesus deduces His own Personality. 'The Father hath life in Himself,' He postulates (John v. 26). His consciousness of also possessing life, leads Him then to the sequence, 'Even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself.' The Father is not contemplated as 'reproducing Himself,' if such a thing were possible, but simply as the only and absolute Fount of all life. Jesus has no vision of *life* beyond the Father. God, even the God

Yahwé, is the God of those who live, doubtless; but life and the idea of God are not connected in Jesus' mind *except through the Father. He is not a Son because He is from God, but because the Father's life has been given to Him.* He finds the sequence of Fatherhood and Sonship in life. Perhaps it is only as 'Father' that God is revealed to Him, for beyond this relationship all appears to be the same to Jesus as to every man in comprehending the thought of Deity. Only the Father knows the Son, and only the Son knows the Father (Matt. xi. 27).

So fully does this fact of life bulk in Jesus' teaching that we are almost compelled to believe that it was the phenomena of life which led Him to the conception of God as a Father. The world truly had conceived the Eternal Being as possessing such a relationship before Jesus made it a fundamental in religion, but it was, for the most part, a pious hope based upon a belief in His pity and mercifulness, and it only approached to a 'likeness' to a father. Jesus never interprets the Fatherhood of God through these attributes of His nature, for if God is not first the Source of man's life, His Fatherhood is inconceivable. *Jesus deduces God's Fatherhood from His power to give life* (John vi. 57). No other has life 'in himself' save the Father (John v. 26). Therefore, there can only be life from the Father.

All life must thus be Father-life, and as Nature testifies to nothing greater than life, but attests it abundantly, Jesus found the revelation of the Father, not only in Himself, but in all living

things. It was not merely a hope, a conjecture, or a pious wish, but a fact, substantive and natural, deep and broad as Life itself, and one irreducible by any critical instrument or solvent known to the human mind. True Nature is ever true Divinity, and Nature is Jesus' grand reservoir of truth. He makes no statement that has not its roots buried in Nature:

We must emphasize, then, the fact that however unknown the Eternal and Absolute might be, even to Jesus, this at least was clear, that the superlative fact of Life revealed Him as a true Father. Hence the child-relationship is asserted in Jesus' system to be the only true one between God and man. Moreover, the infinite series of parents and children, or the Universal Sequence of Life, stretching backwards through all time, proves also that this Eternal Being must be as much a Child as He is a Father. Both relationships are necessary expressions, or 'revelations,' of His absolute nature. They are His vibrations or motions through infinite space. Fathers and children, throughout Nature and human nature, represent the perpetual oscillations of Life in God. In reality they are but one Life. And so Jesus, the Child, the Son, without the least sense of presumption or absurdity, says, 'I and the Father are one.' And, again, 'That they all may be one: as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us.' As the modern mind would phrase it, the Finite and the Infinite are in the same nature, and in the same Life. Both are Divine.

In declaring 'the Kingdom of God,' therefore,

Jesus is not concerned, in the first instance, with modes of conducting life, or with paths to perfection, or generally with the growth and formation of character. He deals with the essentials of being and nature, the impartation of new life, and the fundamental relationship imbedded in the life thus shared by God and man.

It is likewise from this broad basis that Jesus surveys mankind as one, and ignores the accidents of sex, race, family, and nationality. The Hebrews, as a people exclusively 'the children of God,' was a statement untrue. The Father ignored all conventional or assumed relationships save the relationship between Himself and His children. How decidedly Jesus throws out of His system even such a sacred bond as that of the family may be seen in the vehemence of His interrogations, 'Who is My mother? and who are My brethren?' and in the absolute sweep of His answer, 'For whosoever shall do the will of My Father which is in heaven, he is My brother, and sister, and mother' (Matt. xii. 48, 50). The earthly relationships, powerful and paramount as they seem to us, have no place in this 'Kingdom.' 'Call no man your father on the earth, for One is your Father, which is in heaven.' 'Neither be ye called masters' (Matt. xxiii. 9, 10). Also, 'Be not ye called Rabbi,' or teacher. Nay, 'He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me, and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me' (Matt. x. 37). He Himself does not recognise His mother Mary as being more than 'Woman.'

Nor does it seem to have been necessary to the completion of His work that Jesus should proclaim Himself to be either 'Son of God' or 'Son of Man,' for He never accepts as His own the content of thought, or the ideal of relationship which these limiting terms convey. His true relationship to either God or man cannot, indeed, be expressed in the infirmities of sex-language. Jesus used them as wings and not as weights to His thought, even if it be granted that He used them at all. He declares undoubtedly that the Father alone knows the Son, and that the Son alone knows the Father (Matt. xi. 27). But, strictly, neither the divine nor the human relationship is connoted by Him in this statement. And it is always better to interpret Jesus by His ordinary standard of thought than by the restricted measure of the exact content of the literal word He may have had of necessity to employ. In the mind of Jesus, the basal fact of all relationship is that Communicated Personal Life which is given by the Father-God (John v. 26; vi. 57), and which is thinkable to us as divine life on the one hand, and genetic or human life on the other. And as a consequence, all conceptions of sonship, or descent from anyone, divine or human, such as we find prevalent throughout the ancient world regarding notable or godlike men, take rank and position in importance far below that Identical Personal Life which is bound up in the fact of Communicated Life, the truth of which it was Jesus' first purpose to teach in His doctrine of 'The Father.'

'Sonship,' as a word usually understood, is, of

course, legitimate enough as an instrument of thought in any progressive system of dogma regarding Jesus; but His own terms, 'I in Thee'; 'Thou, Father, in Me'; 'I in them'; 'Ye in Me and I in you'; 'That they also may be in Us'; 'That they may all be one,' are statements which clearly assert a far more exalted unity of being, and a more transcendent relationship of Jesus to God and to man, than is possible to the content of any form of words which under pressure may yield up the titles 'Son of God,' or 'Son of Man.' These, indeed, may be convenient expressions in systems of dogma, but as applied to Jesus as definitions they are misleading, although they contain an amplitude of serviceable truth concerning Him which we all find helpful and practicable to our understanding and faith. It is Sequence, not Descent of Life from the Father, which is the governing consciousness in Jesus' thought, with reference to Himself and all creation. And it is this Sequence of Life in heaven and earth which makes the 'Father'-conception of the Eternal One a necessity in Jesus' system, and which also renders the doctrine of the Incarnation intelligible to the human mind. This 'Father'-Life is one throughout the Universe, but being Life, it is not thinkable in relation to man, except under the categories of 'Father' and 'Son.' All the holiest and noblest suggestions and associations of the earthly home are thereby gleaned and carried up into the religious consciousness of men; and in Jesus' personality, as the only conceivable ideal of both 'Father' and 'Son,' both of which terms He

applies to Himself (John xiv. 9), they ultimately focus themselves to human worship as 'God-Man,' or, as St. John has expressed it, 'God only-begotten' (John i. 18).

It is, indeed, this apprehension of the Eternal Being through the reality of Life, and Life begotten, which differentiates the 'God' of the Gospels, and especially of the Fourth Gospel, from all ancient conceptions of Deity whatsoever. Deity with the ancients was never 'one' with man. God isolated Himself up in heaven, or on the mountain tops. His interest in human beings was governmental and providential, but never parental. Both Hebrew religion and Greek philosophy beheld the highest object of their adoration as having no nexus of common life in the human being.

This general notion of deity, so prevalent in the ancient world, is, as we now venture to believe, finally abolished in the Gospels by the declaration of the Eternal Being as One who not only begets man, but is Himself capable of being begotten a man, and is thus, on a foundation of life, 'one' with, and 'in' man. He is, therefore, 'The Father,' necessarily, through the common element of life, and it is this fact which gives force to the incidence of the religion of Jesus upon the minds of men. All other conceptions of deity were fatally doomed when this 'Name' of God once entered the convictions of the human mind. But inevitably their expulsion was effected by different agencies, for while the Synoptists, generally, break away from the God-Ideal of the Hebrews, it is reserved to John to eliminate that which was the product of

Greek thought. He does this in his treatment of the Logos-Deity in his prologue (chap. i. 1-18).

In the form of the Logos, the philosophic conception of deity, as evolved from Greek speculation, had made inroads upon the Hebrew faith, principally through the writings of Philo Judaeus. With consummate art, imitative of his Master, who recreated and revitalized the 'Kingdom,' 'Messiah,' 'Neighbour,' and other cardinal 'words' of His day, John introduces the same 'Logos' name, but unveils through it, not that mystic amalgam of semi-impersonal deity found in Philo, which was compounded of Plato's archetypal 'Ideas,' and the cosmical Powers which the Stoics called 'Logoi,' but the veritable human presence of the man Jesus, as a 'Monogenes Theos,' a 'God only-begotten.' As Harnack points out, in John's Gospel 'the idea of the Logos is allowed to fall from the moment that this takes place' (*Hist. of Dog.*, Trans., 2nd Ed., i. 97 n.). St. John's purpose seems almost intentionally defined, when, having brought forward the Logos ('Word'), he hastens to say, 'That which hath been made was life in Him, and the life was the light of men,' where the whole strength of his statement is focussed upon the word 'Life,' and creation is emphasized as the result of an outpouring, or begetting, from the being, substance, and vital element of a person. This conception of deity was, of course, impossible to either Plato, the Stoics, or Philo, all of whom believed that matter being evil, some intermediary agent between God and His creation, either as 'Idea,' 'Working Power,' or 'Logos,' was abso-

lutely essential, if God Himself were to exist uncontaminated by the things which He made. That God should be 'one' with Creation was to them inconceivable. But St. John's purpose is to assert what they would have repudiated, viz. that God is not only 'one' with Creation, but also 'one' with this begotten Child Jesus. Life is 'in Him': and the Life in Him is not only 'that which hath been made,' or, Creation, but He is, also, in the reality of this One God-Life, God-Begotten; 'Monogenes Theos'; the Only-Begotten God.

In thus characterizing God-Man in terms of the unity of Life, St. John may be regarded as also formulating that 'principle of unity' which underlies all existence, and which is so prominently treated in modern philosophy. He thereby enters the holy of holies of human thought. Philosophy seeks for this principle through all consciousness; science pursues it through all phenomena; and religion of every age proclaims it as the end of all experience. Modern science traces it to the Unknown and Unknowable. Philosophy tracks our consciousness of it through (1) the Not-Self, or, ALL without us, and (2) the Self, or, ALL within us, and thence finds these Twin-Finitudes carried up into an Infinite or Absolute, which it is permissible to consider as 'God.'

St. John abides by the way of Life. Scientific 'phenomena' and philosophic thought are by him transcended. This gives advantages. For because Life is already for all men the principal thing in all phenomena, and also a conscious fact as well

as a thought, a conception of God which rests on, and rises out of Life, considered as both reality and thought, seems guaranteed a securer place in the convictions of all. Life does also yield to science the highest phenomenon, to philosophy the consciousness of the Absolute principle, and to religion the Infinite personality. These results appear to be effected, though quite unconsciously, by St. John, when he sets before us the historical phenomenon Jesus, and unites Him with the universal consciousness of the Infinite and the Finite, Unknown and Known, in the terms, 'God Only-Begotten.' In this way, the ALL without, and the ALL within us, are united in Unknown as well as Known, in Life and Thought, and are united, not merely in the abstract form of an absolute category, but in the bodily phenomenon of an historical mortal, whom human eyes have seen, human ears have heard, and human hands have handled. By this postulate of Life, with its vast range of infinite values, the human mind also reaches a more distinct consciousness and a clearer conviction of the Absolute 'God,' yet not as by transcending the 'Self' and the 'Not-Self,' but by contemplating simply the Thing 'begotten,' the Mystery of the Child. We must use the eye before we can use our faith, the latter, indeed, being but an extension in the mind of the former faculty in the body. It is the natural way, and the way of Jesus (Luke vii. 22). If men had never seen the Divine, men never could have had faith in the Divine. No doubt Thomas, called Didymus, is blamed for his doubts, and for his determination

to see before he believed, but he only began where the world has always begun in its conceptions of deity. God has always committed Himself first to the services of the senses; and all history, and all experience, prove that any real conception of the Eternal Being must first begin in some idea of His corporeity. It is certainly on this basis that St. John, following Jesus, builds up the conception of God. 'Whosoever,' said Jesus, 'shall receive *one* of such little children in My name, receiveth *Me*; and whosoever receiveth *Me*, receiveth not *Me*, but *Him* that sent *Me*' (Mk. ix. 37). From the visible child to the invisible God! Yet this does not mean that our thought must transcend the child. On the contrary, the child is the Invisible revealed; God is 'begotten' *there*. St. John, consequently, has no hesitation in designating the Child Jesus as 'God only-begotten.' He was the first child ever so beheld as 'Lord' and 'God.'

That is to say, apart from the connotations of Life, a true conception of the Divine is inconceivable save as a hallucination; and *only in what God has begotten* can it be apprehended by the open sense and the conscious thought as truth and reality. It is for this reason that no true and final conception of God ever existed in the ages before Jesus, and that His statement is amply justified, 'O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not' (John xvii. 25). It is also evident that such a conception of God, beginning with the child Jesus, must inevitably end in the 'Father'-name, and that what is so begun in Jesus, as 'God-begotten,'

must already be begun in every 'little child.' The Kingdom of Heaven rises out of these deeps of Life. The child, and not the heavens nor the mountain tops, nor yet the 'Unknowable' of science, nor the 'Absolute' of philosophy, is the abiding place of God.

The Father. The Child. These begin and end all relationship recognised by Jesus. God is both. The Father is both. Jesus is both, being the 'Giver of Life.' Both are indeed potentials in every living thing. The seed is the tree, the tree is the seed. All finds its unity and true relationship in the One Life, the Life of the Eternal. The differences in each thing are those of development, but not of essence. They are processes due to temporal requirements. They pass away, the Life abides.

'It is,' therefore, as Prof. A. B. Bruce puts it (*Encyc. Bib.* Article, 'Jesus,' § 13), 'intrinsically probable' 'that Jesus did not employ this new name for God simply under the instinctive guidance of a happy religious genius, but with full consciousness and deliberate purpose.' Jesus, we believe, descended into the depths of Being, and felt the pulse of life in all things as the life of God. The great Creation, whether in form of flesh or stone, spirit or matter, is one fundamentally, and He discerned it to be a begotten child from the substance of the Eternal. God, 'in the beginning,' does not merely speak to an empty 'nothing.' In His infinite love He communes with Himself, and from Himself begets and brings forth all His begotten ones. The vast universe

is not viewed as distinct and apart from the substance of God. It is born in Him, and grows up out of His life, and because He lives it lives also.

Jesus from the first stands on this fact and truth of life. Life is : therefore a Father must be. The word ' Father ' would be an impostor without this meaning. And because Jesus selects it as His defining name for deity, we are forced to believe that the Infinite Being as Life-giver, the Father, was Jesus' fundamental declaration to mankind. And this truth of life is also the truth of Nature. Here is no lie. Falsehood cannot exist in this sphere. God, the Father, is not merely as Yahwé, the God of the living (Mark xii. 27); He is the God who gives the living their life, and is thereby their God *and* their Father. Without the nexus of His life in them, and His personality in that life, He could be neither. The grand aggregate known to us as the religion of Jesus rises up out of this life-reality, viz. co-being with the Eternal Being; individual relationship with God as ' Father ' ; Jesus' own conception of His personality as ' The Life ' ; this life as Eternal Life in all who are thus related to the Father-God; the obligations and ideals of human life, conceivable as a ' Kingdom,' which such co-being, individual relationship, and eternal life-possession entail upon the human soul.

How early Jesus apprehended this position ! At twelve He discusses it with the doctors in the Temple, for, as He told His parents, He was ' in the things of the Father.' His was indeed the true voice of God which men at length heard; His

a voice uttered in diviner accents than ever rose out of a burning bush or from a blazing mountain ; for it was the voice of a child calling upon the Eternal Father of all. It is the root truth of the great universe. It is the deepest note in the universal praise. And until Jesus spoke His latest word, He had but one name to declare, and one religion in that name.

CHAPTER II.

CONCERNING LIFE AND DEATH.

THE use to which Jesus put the 'Kingdom'-conception must ultimately, perhaps, come to be regarded as a temporary concession to the religious state of mind in which He found His generation. Everywhere, high or low, He saw the common mind replete with a vision of a coming 'Kingdom.' And to abolish what priest and people had mistakenly meant by it, He seems to have found it necessary to absorb it, and revitalize it. But it is clear to all thoughtful minds that such a suggestion of a 'kingdom,' with all its stern, circumscribed, and divisive connotations; harsh, at best, to all men in every period; has really acted as a hindrance to the education of the human race in those higher conceptions of truth which perhaps were of more vital concern to it.

How vast, for example, has been the determining power over the human mind of such a sinister dualistic division of the universe as is implied in the terms, 'Spirit' and 'Matter'? The mind of the race has oscillated constantly towards 'Spiritism' or 'Materialism'; and issuing forth from these continental regions, 'Religion' has con-

tended to the death with 'Irreligion' in thousand-fold forms of warfare. It is most certain, however, that the human mind can make no permanent progress, in any direction, scientifically, philosophically, or theologically, until these dividing boundary walls are broken down. It is impossible for man, otherwise, to truthfully understand himself.

If Jesus had failed to surpass all such 'Kingdom'-limitations, and had contented Himself with these constrictive conceptions as being sufficient for the full and final growth and development of His great scheme of human existence,—if He had failed to find the unifying fact and term in which 'Spirit' and 'Matter' are possible to the faith of mankind *as an identity*,—His religion would have inevitably perished. For it is consciousness of identity in body and soul, mind and matter, that, at bottom, renders our existence tolerable; and it is consciousness of identity in the apparently myriad dissimilarities of the universe that saves all intelligence from sheer despair, and insinuates to faith and reason the conviction that one Personal Identity, one Eternal Being fathers all His creatures, and so renders impossible the thought that man is merely one poor sheep among millions of a vast flock which wanders 'lost' and shepherdless over an infinite wilderness.

But the 'Kingdom' conception was really inimical to such an unifying result, and as a matter of history, it created religious stupor in Jesus' near contemporaries, and contention among His earlier disciples as to the admission of the

Gentiles; it moulded the erroneous conception of His 'Church'; and gave a show of authority to the prodigious after-pretences of the Papacy; while it helped, from the beginning, to warp the ideal conception of the hereafter into that of a 'city,' a 'country,' a 'kingdom,' for the whole of Christendom, to such an extent as to spread, down to our own time, a broad band of falsity across the entire range of Christian worship. It must undoubtedly have also made it a harder task for the Apostles to wipe out the subordinate divisive prejudices which they found cohering like doctrinal barnacles round such distinctions as 'male and female,' 'bond and free,' 'Jew and Greek.' It seemed, in short, to establish a restrictive precedent in the Master's teaching, and to give His authority to a policy of limitation and contraction which appeared to justify His followers in creating other bounding walls, on their own account, in order to maintain His example and ideal. The early councils of the Church exemplify this trend in primitive Christianity. The Pharisees and Scribes had been denounced for shutting the kingdom of heaven against men (Matt. xxiii. 13), but no sooner did power descend on the Church to open and to close, than the same Hebrew instincts to close rather than to open pervaded every Christian council. It is the long, sad story of Church history. With so many proofs before us in our own day, of the rearing and rending of all manner of ecclesiastical forms and fences, we are not disposed to believe that such debarring influences and intentions are even yet moribund.

Only the irreducible and constraining power which lay, and yet lies, in the fact and term of 'Life,' has been sufficient, with its implication of the 'Father' source, to save the religion of Jesus from these noxious disintegrations, and, like the force within the egg-shell, to burst the 'Kingdom' crusts which from the beginning have menaced its very existence in the world. Frustrated and foiled (see Matt. xx. 20-28) by the very associations of the 'Kingdom'-conception which He was yet compelled to adopt and recognise, Jesus, it is evident, only employed the one in order to advance the supremacy of that other of 'Life,' upon which rested the great and essential doctrine of 'the Father,' on which His system is pivoted and revolves. We are daring enough also to believe that it is the same fact and term of 'Life,' not as the impersonal thing known to science, but as Jesus has taught it to Man, which will not only give kinship to the great words 'Spirit' and 'Matter,' but prove their *identity* in the personality of the Father-God,—a desideratum which should be as acceptable to science as it undoubtedly is a *sine qua non* for theology. Life, we believe, is the dynamic behind both 'Spirit' and 'Matter.'

Apart from Life being the root fact in such terms as 'Father,' 'Son,' 'The Living God,' Jesus seems to identify the term 'Life' with the phrase 'Kingdom of God' as in Mark ix. 43, 45, 47. We there read, 'And if thy hand cause thee to stumble, cut it off . . . it is good for thee to *enter into life* maimed. . . . If thy foot cause thee to stumble, cut it off, it is good for thee to *enter into life* halt.

. . . If thine eye cause thee to stumble, cast it out, it is good for thee to *enter into the Kingdom of God* with one eye.' The 'Life' in the first two instances identifies itself in the mind of Jesus with the 'Kingdom of God' in the last. And just as 'Life' is interchanged with 'eternal life' in Matt. xix. 16, 17, there appears to be no doubt that similarly the 'Kingdom of God' is the same thing as the 'kingdom of heaven,' and the 'kingdom of the Father.' The 'kingdom of the Father,' therefore, and 'Eternal Life,' may be regarded as identities, having the same connotations in all respects in the mind of Jesus. And as the 'Father,' in the first generalization of Jesus, is specifically a generalization of Life with reference to its source, and the 'Kingdom of God' a generalization of Life with regard to the growth and development of this life of the Father, it is apparent that the religion of Jesus is not so much an affair of sin and law, of guilt and expiation of guilt, as one of vitality, birth, and of being 'one' with God, as He Himself is 'one' with the Father. This unity, or at-one-ment, is centred, therefore, in life and not in law.

This fully accounts for the ponderous emphasis which He lays upon Life with reference to His own Person, His relationship to the Father-God, and its necessity for all His followers. It also explains why sin and law are thrust into the background of His teaching as compared with the 'kingdom of the Father.' He implies that if the main thing for man is 'Our Father' in heaven, the chief concern for all men is that this kingdom

should come upon the earth. Only when this takes place can God's *will* be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Law is possible for man after he obtains life.

It has been reserved for our latter days to appreciate somewhat the gravity of Jesus with respect to the fact of life, and, in a minor way, by our scientific students, to place that value upon the knowledge and possession of it which was the first purpose of our Lord's existence. No doubt we shall be told that the 'Life' which is the subject of the science of biology, and the 'Life' which Jesus says He came to give men abundantly, are not the same Life. This must remain, however, an unsolved problem until Life can be defined and analysed. We do not know what life is (*Life of Darwin*, chap. xiv.). 'The nature of life is unknown' (Sir. O. Lodge, *Hib. Jour.*, No. 10, p. 322). Perhaps the thing is in itself the same, and only differently contemplated. But we may venture to say that there is a tendency in our time to abandon the old dualism which put the spiritual life as a separate thing apart from the physical life, considered biologically, and to believe now that as they are one in the human consciousness of personality, so also they may be one throughout the universe. 'Matter and life,' said Prof. Huxley (*Physical Basis of Life*), 'are inseparably connected.' 'There is some one kind of matter which is common to all living things.' Theologians as well as scientists seem to accept this position. Bishop Westcott declared, 'We all at last acknowledge, more or less, that all life is one' (*Historic*

Faith, I.). 'Matter,' he avers, 'is, as far as I can see, only the manifestation of force, life in the widest sense, under the conditions of time and space' (*Hib. Jour.*, No. 8, p. 795). He believed that Matter 'has in itself no existence.'

There is thus a tendency in both religious and scientific circles to eliminate 'Matter,' and to bring rational conviction more closely to our consciousness of unity in the universe, and instead of the dualistic 'Spirit' and 'Matter,' to regard Huxley's 'some one kind of matter' as Westcott's 'life in the widest sense,' or, Life expressed by its highest term of Spirit. No man, indeed, is ever conscious of a life in his spirit and another life in his body. He is conscious only of one life ranging through his 'matter' and his 'spirit.' All he is; one he is. 'Spirit' and 'body' have one life, and have unity in that life. And speaking of this common experience of the close relation between 'mind' and 'matter,' Sir Oliver Lodge notes that 'philosophers have been so impressed with this that they have conjectured that mind and matter are but aspects, or modes of perception, of one fundamental comprehensive unity; a unity which is neither exactly mind nor exactly matter as we conceive them, but is something fundamental and underlying both, as the ether is now conceived of as sustaining and in some sense constituting all the phenomena of the visible universe. This monistic view,' he goes on to say, 'if true at all, is likely to be permanently and actually true' (*Hib. Jour.*, No. 14, p. 319).

Science thus does nothing to contradict, but

rather encourages a belief in that unity of all things in the thing Jesus called 'Life,' or life's apex-form, 'Spirit,' which, together with all it connotes, and especially its personal connotations, was the grand burden of His teaching. For if God Eternal, as Jesus asserted, is Father to man, and necessarily, therefore, Father to all the elements composing man, then a disposition is created to regard both the spirit and flesh of man's personality as having a common source in the Being of the same Father, that is, in His Life communicated, which thus becomes man. And if they are one in their source, it cannot be doubted that they are one in essence, under all variations of growth and development through time and eternity. There is no doubt that the power which Jesus wields over men affects their bodies as distinctly as their souls; and in doing so it does no more than vindicate the claim He constantly maintained in the flesh, viz. to control the realm of 'Matter' as well as that of 'Spirit.'

And 'life' seems to be the only term left to us by which we may signify that spirit and flesh are not only one in our thought, but also one in actual being. Scientists appear to be generally agreed that the life of the fish, the fowl, the beast, and the man, is one life. The principle of vitality indicated in all these organisms seems to justify the opinion that the life of the one is essentially identical with the life of all. Indeed, during vast ages (which Dr. Bastian yet considers to have been not so vast), this order and identity of life does not seem to have been different. Perhaps all plant

life is also to be included in this category. Some would even include all minerals as sharing in this life (*Response in the Living and Non-living*. Prof. J. C. Bose. Longmans).

We are told that plant life were impossible unless the earth fed it or gave it life by means of countless living germs composing its substance. Certain bacteria, we are assured, are capable of drawing their food from purely mineral sources, and are to be found on what is seemingly the barest of the rock surfaces. These bacteria even penetrate the interior of rock masses, and thus make a beginning to the organic matter of the soil.

Again, germ life seems practically to be as innumerable in air as in earth, and although some scientists have considered it necessary to find the life on the earth to have been originally brought to it from some other world at some illimitably remote period of the past, yet speculative thought might very well assume that life, being so abundant in earth and air, may be as abundant germinally, or electronly, in all space outside of earth and air, and be, indeed, wherever the Principle of all Life is, throughout absolute space.

As a matter of fact, the frontiers of 'Death' are being slowly moved back, and whole continents of space are seen now to be active with life, which, heretofore, were accepted as lying under the pall of lifelessness.

This would seem to be amply attested by recent scientific research. Burke (J. Butler), experimenting with radium cultures, says that they 'are obviously altogether outside the beaten track of

living things.' They appear to lie 'in the borderland between crystals and bacteria, organisms in the sense in which we have employed the word, and possibly the missing link between the animate and inanimate.' These 'Radiobes,' or 'radio-organic organisms,' he thinks, may bridge (roughly speaking) the gap between the organic and inorganic worlds. He asks, 'May they not also be the source of life upon this planet?' (*Fort. Rev.*, Sept., 1905; *Origin of Life*. Also, see his recently (1906) published book, *Origin of Life*: Chapman & Hall).

Bastian in his recently published work (*Nature and Origin of Living Matter*) also ably argues for acceptance of his belief that living matter and living things 'do arise into being *de novo*.' Both on general and special grounds he claims that 'so-called Spontaneous Generation' need not be scouted as a baseless chimera. He points out that the coming of life always eludes the observation of men. 'It may now be taking place all over the face of the earth in favourable media, and yet this most subtle process will reveal itself to no one.' His hypothesis is that living matter is formed by a process of synthesis from its primitive elements, and that this 'living matter, so arising, in the form of minute particles, is assumed to speedily develop into one or other of the lowest living things (micrococci, bacilli, torulae, etc.) previously mentioned' (see also his *Origin and Development of Living Matter* in *Independent Review*, Sept., 1905).

But even if we regard this as true, within the

limits of our Earth, it is yet suggested that the extremely low temperature of space precludes all hope of the existence of life beyond the contact of our atmosphere. This condition of cold, however, seems in no way to prohibit the existence of life. This was forcibly illustrated by Prof. James Dewar, 10th Sept., 1902, in his Presidential Address at Belfast before the British Association (*Lancet*, 13th Sept., 1902).

Typical bacteria, he vouched, had been exposed to the temperature of liquid air, which commands something like 200 degrees below that of melting ice, for twenty hours, without affecting their vitality, or impairing their functional activities. 'A similar persistence of life in seeds had been demonstrated even at the lowest temperature.' And, he adds, 'at such a temperature the cells could not be said to be either alive or dead, in the ordinary acceptance of these words. It was a new and hitherto unobtained condition of living matter—a third state.'

This seems to support the view that the lowest temperature of inter-world space may not be fatal to germinal life. It may rather point to the fact of the Earth receiving its constant replenishment of life out of that fathomless reservoir. It is always a risk to speculate, but, it may be, that the waves of sunlight to which we attribute all health, and heat, derive their vitalizing power from coming through such a reservoir of life, and bearing to the earth their burdens of life-cells, or electrons, which subsequently develop through all forms of finite existence. 'All life must come

from life' may yet be found true in respect of all earth-life being derived from all space-life. It does not seem to be proved that a chasm of non-life separates this earth from the rest of the universe. Universality of potential life in all matter may be admitted, it is believed by some scientists. There is a presupposition that all that is necessary to life, such as light, heat, etc., may be themselves, in some sense, living elements. And if we could accept this as true, it would only bring scientific fact into line with the assumption of the theologian, and the assumption made by Jesus, that the Father-God being everywhere, Life must be everywhere also.

Indeed, considering the various statements of life made by Nature, in germ, egg, plant, animal, and man, we should perhaps feel encouraged to believe that, as all life is seen in a process of being raised to some infinite, or Nth power above us, so likewise the same process may extend below us to a minus infinite, or Nth power; and that neither the stone on the one hand, nor the spirit of man on the other, give to life its final boundaries. From our feeble vision of life in this world we do not seem able to affirm of it that at any point it is either absolutely consummated or absolutely nil, but only that it is, with plus or minus as its perpetual concomitant relative to ourselves.

This at least seems to have been the position of Jesus with regard to Life. Wherever it is found, in the grass, the lily, the bird, the animal, or in the souls of His hearers, or in Himself, or in the Father, He has always the same personal reverence

towards it, the same language to employ, and the same identity with His own life to acknowledge. It is enough that they are all related to the Great Father, His and theirs. But if all are truly *related* to the Father, then it must be the Father's Life which alone creates that relationship. Father He could not be to them otherwise.

The immense value placed upon all life by Jesus has never been paralleled in human thought. The declamations in the Old Testament of 'vanity and vexation of spirit' connected with life, or the veiled contempt and pessimism implied in its being a 'vapour' that passeth away, He ignores in charitable silence. It is never so to Him. Life, to Him, under any form, is never less than the presence of the Father.

This principle of Life as a universality throughout the Creation, which Jesus indicates as His faith, is not more remarkable as a pillar-principle in His system than is His steadfast disregard of earthly parentage in connection with life, so far as He Himself, at least, is concerned. For Jesus, there is but One Father, and one relationship by that Father's communicated life. Jesus emphatically avoids relating Himself to man by way of the sexes, and He urges others to do the same. He regards one relationship alone as true. The rest are convenient fictions. He does not seem to despise these fictitious relationships when there is no fear of their being held as true in actual fact, for He Himself gives to John a 'mother' in Mary, at the Cross, and to Mary a 'son' in the beloved disciple. But, to Jesus, the Source of all life, and

not its sex-media, is the one and only Nexus of genuine relationship, here or hereafter.

Within the scope of the Bible we find that its profoundest statements on Life are those which proceed from the lips of Jesus. The four Gospels bear a concordant testimony to this fact. Fundamentally there is but one root-truth to be found in the four Gospels, the Truth of Life. All four voices, like a four-part harmony, have this primal fact for their theme. The Synoptists interpret it from the historical side, and John from the side which is above history. He, for most part, speaks from the sphere out of which history takes its origin. But they all make their Life-Symphony close in the Person of Jesus. And this Personality of Jesus, both in its historical and super-historical aspects, yields up, from their manifold statements of it, the one truth to the world, viz. the Life of the Father-God which was in Jesus as the fixed base of all other life in the universe, and, as resting upon this fact, the indestructible bond of His own and our relationship to the Eternal Being, who, out of His own Life, has begotten all things for His children. The glorious Personality, which stands out whole and one in the fourfold testimony of these writers, is Itself, under the forms of Father and Child, but the focussed Image of this Eternal Life, having eternity for its background, and time for its sphere of development.

John directs the eye to the Origin of this Life. 'Ye must be born from above' (iii. 7). Birth, new life, is 'from above.' It draws 'from out the boundless deep.' It is then the thing begotten,

and enters history. Hence St. Matthew's tracing of its course in the child. 'Become as little children' (xviii. 3). This is the true Way of Life. For it is the beginning of all relationship. It is also the end. For to be the true child, the child personally perfected, exhausts the moral purpose of the centuries. And as they speak Jesus' words, there is nothing greater than this to be achieved in all time, for this is the Father-God 'declared,' manifested, or 'made one' with His creation. The Father thus becomes the All-Child as well as the All-Father. God is then not merely 'revealed,' or made 'immanent' in, the Living Thing, so begotten. We must understand Him to *be* this begotten thing. And it is upon this fact that St. Mark places emphasis. 'Whosoever receiveth one of such little children in My name, receiveth Me, and whosoever receiveth Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me' (ix. 37). Luke's testimony corroborates. There is no break in the sequence of fact. Life is 'from above,' beyond every 'created' thing, descending out of Primeval Life into all things, of which the child is the highest expression and personal image. Now, the descent of this Life, for the body, is, says science, by the protoplasmic cell, but for the spirit, says St. John, it is by the truth as it is in Jesus. The words He speaks are both spirit and life (John vi. 63). The born child who, unlike Jesus, wanders from the path of perfect relationship, must be again born into the perfection of Jesus, *the perfection of His relationship with the Father and with man*, He having the Life of the Father in Himself. Life,

as life, is, indeed, perfect in the child, but not the relationships of personal life. Only the Father has a personal Life perfect in its relationships to all. The child has the Father's perfect Life, but not His perfect relatedness, either as regards relation to Himself or to man. It is this perfectly related personal life which Jesus effects first for Himself, and then for all men, through the power of the begetting truth which He declares from the Father. It is birth 'from above' into new related life. For just as bodily birth, though perfect life in itself, is only able to have further life by maintaining a perfect relationship to all its bodily surroundings, so also every spirit-life, though perfect as life, can only have continuous, or eternal life, by sustaining a perfect personal life with the Father and with all men, through following the Way of truth given in the Person and words of Jesus. This is one way in which we are to understand such expressions as 'born again,' 'become as little children.' Death only ensues upon a wrong relationship. But following Jesus, every soul becomes a child, a 'son of its Father' (Matt. v. 45), with perfect personal relationship to God and to man, and thus enters the kingdom of eternal life. This perfect personal relationship is the burden of the four Gospels.

Life, therefore, whether considered as an Origin, a Process, a Growth, a Revelation, or an Identity with God and man, from eternity to eternity, forms but one single Image in the eyes of these four Evangelists, however diversely, by means of his 'Gospel,' each may transfer the Image of his vision

to the eyes of men. What they say far transcends the mere account of Creation, the beginning of all things. It is the process which preceded the nebulous condition of Creation with which they are concerned, the process by which even now the Creation maintains its course, the process of Life. The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel is, of course, one of the chief proofs of this statement. The process of Creation and the process of Life are beheld there as identical. The slightest comparison of the first chapter of Genesis with the leading verses of John's Prologue, gives sufficient demonstration of this.

For example, the 'In the beginning' of John does not refer to the same beginning of things as the 'In the beginning' of Genesis. John's view extends through a retrospective space which antecedes the 'beginning' of Time and the ordering of the Universe. He deals with the Source of 'matter,' and the actual 'matter' itself, out of which 'the heavens and the earth' were subsequently created and made. John treats of the Being, the Eternal One; whereas Genesis treats of His doings. In the Hebrew narrative, God works similarly to the designer of a ship who out of pre-existing material calls it into existence. For when God is said to create the heavens and the earth, we cannot infer that for the first time He also originated 'matter.' From the data given us, He simply directs a pre-existing material into solar and sidereal systems.

This pre-existing material is declared by John to be 'The Word.' It is affirmed likewise to be

God, for 'the Word was God.' In Genesis, this Word is a command which flies apart from God, into 'Nothing,' it is said, and out of this Nothing 'all things' are created. The Word, in that account, is impersonal. No life is connoted in it as going forth into the 'all things' made. For this reason, the heavens and the earth were never more to the Hebrews than 'dead matter,' although God Himself was believed to be the 'Living One.' In John, on the contrary, God is the Father of ALL Things, for all things are born out of His own Life. 'That which was made was Life in Him,' who was the Word, who was God (John i. 3). These three—God, the Word, His Life, and 'that which was made,' or Creation, are united not by mere commands, but by identical personal Being. 'All things' are 'Life in Him.' They are not 'dead'; nor by the nature of things can death have a substantive place in them. They have not come out of Nothing, but out of the pre-existing material of God's own Life. He has *begotten* All things, and is, therefore, the Father of ALL.

The highest example of this fact is adduced when it is said, 'And the Life was the Light of men' (John i. 4). Man is the Universe in floriation. His life is identical with the Life which fills the Universe. He is an integral part of the Creation. And it is this universal Life which is his 'Light.' Not merely the light of the Eye, of the Intellect, of the Conscience, or of Consciousness; for these are only channels of Light; but the Light itself, 'the candle of the Lord,' the Spirit in man, to which his consciousness, conscience,

intellect, and eye, are but emissive and serviceable portals. This 'Light' is God's own Life, which through evolutionary processes attains in Creation its highest incandescence in Man; and it is also by the brilliancy of this Life in his Soul that Man is enabled to see, though not so vividly, the same Light shading downwards through an ever-deepening gloom of creational twilight into animal, plant (and crystal), till, in the stone, 'darkness' seems to 'comprehend' and 'overcome' it (John i. 5). Nevertheless, even in such 'darkness' the Life still burns. Jesus could hear the stones ready to cry out!

From this lofty eminence of the Prologue we are also permitted to behold the phenomena of Birth and Death as changing waves in the onward tide of a shoreless Ocean. The course of Life is one, and is from eternity to eternity, flowing forth from a Personality, a Father, into 'All things.' The Universe, as we behold it, is the continuous materialization and incarnation of the Eternal One throughout Space and Time; and this incarnation in man cannot be restricted to one man exclusively, or to one particular period of history.

And as Birth and Death are manifestly incidental episodes in Life past, so the Future Life seems only intelligible as a projection of the same Father-Life, progressively developing itself to everlasting, having death-birth, or resurrection, as starting point for its further course through the eternal spaces before us. It is, indeed, even as Jesus saw it to be, a sublime Ascension forever to His Father

and our Father, and to His God and our God (John xx. 17).

It is in perfect harmony with the Prologue of John that Jesus disclaims Himself to be the Absolute source of Life. He carries Life beyond Himself to its fountainhead in the Father. 'I live because of the Father' (John vi. 57). 'For as the Father hath Life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have Life in Himself' (John v. 26). This harmony is still more evident when we read, 'And without Him was not anything made. That which hath been made was Life in Him, and the Life was the Light of men' (John i. 3-4) (Marginal reading of R.V. See also Westcott and Hort's Greek Text).

Doubtless, Jesus declares 'I am . . . the Life' (John xiv. 6), 'I am the resurrection and the Life' (John xi. 25). But the Life Absolute does not seem to be implied in these statements. They treat of Life as relative to human wants, and have the value found in such verses as, 'Because I live ye shall live also' (John xiv. 19); 'I came that they may have Life, and may have it abundantly' (John x. 10). He is not asserting in these verses an absolute source of Life, but the eternal value of the Life He brings to men as a gift—a gift which He Himself had received from the Father. We should, indeed, fail to understand His teaching on such correlated subjects as death and the resurrection if this transcendent position which Life occupies in His system were omitted. It is His aim to place the source and reservoir of Life in the bosom of the Father, far beyond change and

death, law or sin, and to hold up all creational phenomena, death included, as ancillary to life, and, in an infinity of ways, carrying forward its behests. In Jesus' system death is by no means an absolute. He makes no positive statement as to the fact of death such as He makes with regard to life. He even stands in the presence of death and denies it as a fact. In the presence of Jairus's daughter, He maintains 'She is not dead,' although the whole narrative is stultified if the girl was not dead, as we count death.

Indeed, it may be questioned whether Jesus regarded death, as we understand it, as having existence anywhere, or we might say that it is doubtful if He regarded anything as absolutely without life. We speak of animate and inanimate nature. But Jesus addresses the corpse as one hearing Him. He speaks to the fig tree as to an individual. He salutes the winds and waves as living sentient things. He hears the stones opening their hard mouths to cry out. Was all this a weakness in Him, or only the poet? and must we excuse Him that His fancy should so outrun scientific accuracy? He speaks to diseases as 'spirits.' Are we more correct when we call them germs, microbes, bacteria? Is it not science that is slowly moving up to His position in its statement of life? So far as language conveys thought, we must judge from the words of Jesus that *He regarded nothing as inanimate*. It is usual to modify His statements by diluting suggestions of metaphor and parable. It may have been so, but so far as scientific research has yet gone, it

makes for a presumption that the truth is to be found in taking His words literally. Life to Jesus is the primal thing, the first motion of God, which, like an ocean, bears all creation on its bosom, death being a mere undulation on its surface. Death may be as deep and as wide as creation, but life is as deep and as wide as God, and Jesus constantly speaks and acts as bearing a mandate from the profounder source.

It is because of this conception of life that He wraps it up in the word 'Father.' *It is the only term that can convey to our intelligence the idea of personality as conjoined to life communicated to another personality.* But personality we do not know, and life we do not know. We have, however, knowledge of or faith in Fatherhood, and it is by this ladder which He sets up upon the earth that we ascend to God.

A strong barrier to receiving this conception has prevailed over all Christendom by the acceptance of the Hebrew notions of uncleanness as connected with the fathering of life. And, here, in the interests of truth, we must crave an indulgence from conventional modesty. When Luke must write of the begetting of Jesus, he finds it necessary to exclude the male principle from that transaction. 'The angel answered and said unto her (Mary), The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee' (Luke i. 35). The Christian Church has hitherto interpreted these words to mean that the male principle was ignored in Jesus' birth. We have no doubt that this interpretation is directly due

to the Jewish foul-mindedness which held all sex-relationship as unclean, and births as uncleannesses. The early Jewish Christians must have revolted from the idea of anything holy or divine being born in the natural way. There was no uncleanness, of course, except in the Jewish imagination; and all that science has revealed of life, and of life-processes so far, only encourages us to believe that *not only in the case of Jesus, but of all begotten things, the Holy Ghost and the power of the Most High overshadows all the beginnings of life*. All life is life divine. No life, as we think, exists without divinity in it. And, as we view the teaching of Jesus, *all life is Father-life*, and because all life has its incorruptible source in the Father, it follows that *every conception in His life is an immaculate conception*. Every child, as every life, is a revelation of the Father.

Translating these facts into modern terms, *God, therefore, while absolute and infinite, becomes finite through the fact of Fatherhood*. He does not create the finite apart from His essential infinitude. The Finite is *begotten* in His own being and out of His own substance, and becomes through His Fatherhood the hereditary possession of all His begotten ones. Without God as *Father* no form of finitude could be possible, for it is through this medium that He transmits His Eternalness into the temporary; His boundless freedom into the submissive limitations of the conditioned, His Godhead into childhood, His eternal life into mortal life, Himself into Nature.

We seem now to be able to assert with reason

that the system of Jesus involves the fact of *Life personalized in Fatherhood by the Infinite God*; and that so the Infinite One, in the sacrifice of His love, descends into finitude and places Himself under limitations, and begets all things in His universe after the order of this Fatherhood; and that, consequently, it is only by the Infinite, as become a Father, that Jesus is a Son, and that we have Eternal Life personalized in ourselves, and also can have the Eternal Love revealed to us by this personalized part of His Life within us.

This, indeed, is the loftiest example of the 'law' stated by Jesus which is at once a law of nature and a law of religion. He said, 'Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone, but if it die it beareth much fruit' (John xii. 24). The Infinite Being had first to experience the giving up of life before He could realize 'fruit.' Otherwise, this great law could have had no validity either in man or in creation. Jesus declares that though dead the grain of wheat still lives and bears fruit. It is because the Eternal One resolved not to abide by Himself alone, that He 'died' or sacrificed life in Himself, to bring forth much fruit. This 'death,' or sacrifice of life (for it is not expiration), He experienced when He elected to limit Himself in Fatherhood. The Infinite One in doing so passed downwards as the Father into the Begotten, the Finite; or, from an Absolute to a Related Existence. The drift towards Incarnation began in the first motions of God the Absolute. For He must have had this experience, else no other could have had it. He

holds communion with all His children in 'death' as much as in life, and He does so by virtue of His Fatherhood by which He refused to 'abide alone.'

And so far as human understanding appears capable of apprehending the teaching of Jesus in its profundity regarding this matter, Death, far from being 'an enemy' or 'the last enemy,' as His followers imagined, is the highest evidence we possess of the manifestation of Eternal Love, through the voluntary suspension or limitation of His absolute Life in all its boundless freedom, in order that He might become the first Begotten, the Father, the Infinite-Finite, the *Other-Self*, in the universe of 'matter' and of man. Death is too universal a principle, if not an absolute, to be other than a divine one. And it appears to us that no experience of death which any creature undergoes in a universe, where death seems to reign throughout, can be more than a feeble suggestion of what this suspension or suppression of Eternal Life and freedom on the part of the Absolute God must have been to Him in His origination of all things as a Father.

Jesus' conception of 'death' has, indeed, planted in the human mind a new thought of substantive power regarding this mysterious phenomenon. It rises out of His unique teaching on Life. In common thinking, death means deprivation, or absence of life. But to Jesus, death never connotes total extinction or complete absence of vitality. He covers His thought of death by the word 'Sleep.' This, indeed, might be deemed but a

happy way of expressing the popular idea. It is profoundly different. He is far from co-ordinating His thought of death with that of the common mind. The universal conception of Sleep is the furthest compromise which He grants to the people's asseverations of death. In the cases of Jairus's daughter, the widow of Nain's son, and Lazarus of Bethany (assuming the narratives), Life has only lulled down in death, but is not wholly extinct. He recognises and addresses the personalities of the dead as still abiding in the body. They are not merely 'disembodied spirits'; they are all they ever were; intact, alive, and mixing in some unknown way with the general motions of the world. But, to the people, these bodies were 'dead,' and by the universal judgment, they would have been held as 'dead.'

It is a new teaching on death, unknown to the ancient world, and but feebly realized in modern times. Jesus, in short, offers a direct denial to the common conception of death, and it is evidently due to His original view of Father-life as pervading all things. In place of the popular idea, He affirms the fact of a phenomenon of sleep, not as being confined to man merely, but as prevailing over the whole realm of existence. This is to be inferred from His mode of addressing the wind, the sea, the tree, and the stone, in the same way that He speaks to those whom all believe and declare to be 'dead.' Sleep, according to Jesus, has a substantive place in all nature, while death, as we think it, has no sphere at all in the realm of Being. 'Death,' as it is conceived, is in reality

sleep. Nothing is ever absolutely without life. The stone, the crystal, the plant, the animal, the man, are existent in increasing degrees of wakefulness, under the expansive and conscious-creating influences of life, and while those still in sleep are moving upward into the wakeful consciousness of the animal or the man, the latter, on the other hand, are moving downwards in 'death' to the sleep of the plant and the crystal. The experience of all creation is one, with variations of time and degree. Death in the man is but the experience of that sleep which is the normal 'life' of the stone; and life in him descends once more to the level of vitality which at one time was normal to it.

As a consequence, Jesus assumes and implies in His acts and words that no life ever passes beyond recalling, or re-wakening, to its previous condition of being, no matter how deep its sleep may be. The dead in their graves can hear the Voice which bids them come forth (John v. 28). The Sleep which rounds 'our little life,' and that life itself, are only phases of the coming and going, the moving or resting, the receding or advancing of the creation-wide principle of Life-in-Fatherhood. Man comes from the Father, and again he goes to the Father. Both coming and going are 'Life in Him.' Man neither comes out of, nor goes into death, for neither spirit nor body has capacity for total absence of life, though all life has an unknown capacity for sleep, deep or deepest.

Fatherhood, if we dare to say it, is the fountain-head of death, and Love in sacrifice called it forth. And so in the fullest sense it was possible for Jesus

to say, 'I lay down My life that I may take it again.' For the primal sacrifice of the Eternal, in becoming Father, was the laying down of His Life that He might take it again in all finite and father-full existence. Jesus was simply carrying on the 'Work' of the Father who had so worked hitherto. 'Therefore doth My Father love Me,' said Jesus, 'because I day down My life.' This seems to us to be the true thought which Jesus had in His mind as to 'death.' He was doing the Father's will, and He was to do it as the Father had done, viz. 'To lay down His life,' and not merely to expire.

Jesus realizes Himself in this way as a Father also, *because* He lays down His life. Men receive His life from Him, and thereby He does not abide alone, but brings forth much fruit. And the purpose is ever the same in time as in a by-past eternity, viz. To beget the new personality, and not merely to blot out Sin, or to cancel a debt. The grand purpose in all creation is ever to create the new personality, not merely to purify a personality already existing. And Jesus' 'Work' is always level to this universal purpose.

Moreover, like the Infinite One, the 'laying down of life' on Jesus' part was completely voluntary. 'No one taketh (or took) it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power (or right) to take it again.' 'And,' He adds, surely with the profoundest significance, 'this commandment received I *from My Father*' (John x. 18). Not in Jesus did this originate. The Eternal One had accomplished this 'laying down'

of life, this 'dying,' far back in the unfathomable deeps of eternity, and Jesus now seeks to realize the same 'commandment' from the Father, on the narrower plane of time. Jesus is particular to say that 'the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father doing, for what things soever He doeth, these the Son doeth *in like manner*' (John v. 19). Whatever meaning, therefore, we attach to the 'work' of Jesus on earth must also be carried up into the 'work' of the Father. If Jesus' work on earth is summed up as solely a redemption from guilt, a justification of law, a dying for sin, *then the work of the Father must be held to have been the same, for Jesus only works what the Father has hitherto worked.* We prefer to believe that the work of Jesus was, like the Father's work, not juridical, but creational, and had the same purpose within it as that of the Eternal One, viz. to lay down His life *in* His words and works, and *in* His everyday life of self-surrender and sacrifice, in order to bring forth fruit in the new lives of His begetting, even as the Eternal One had done in Fatherhood, to bring forth His Child, His universe.

This eternal purpose of God ran like a flood in Jesus, even as it had swept all creation through myriads of ages, and Jesus is sent with no new purpose, but with one old as the Fatherhood of God itself, viz. to give life and to give it more abundantly.

If this statement be correct, *we should find God's Fatherhood as deeply revealed in nature as it is in Jesus.* For we are asserting that the Eternal

Being became Father to bring forth the Universal All, and that man in Jesus is only the most advanced development of the All so begotten. The principle of life, or the process of *giving of life*, should, therefore, be the pre-eminent one, in both spheres of nature and human nature, *for this is the special attribute of Fatherhood*. Do we find this?

Jesus Himself, in His doctrine, assumes a Father's relationship to sun, rain, grass, winds, and waves, and birds. He acknowledges no other relationship for nature. *And the foremost fact in nature and human nature is undoubtedly the strong force or emphasis which is laid upon life.*

Nature herself is never concerned about guilt, and is careless whether sin is punished or pardoned, but she has a purpose wide, deep, and strong as a thunderstorm, and that is *to produce life, to quicken, to bring forth much fruit*. Now, Fatherhood knows nothing deeper than this, but it is this to the full. And herein do we find the same Fatherhood of the Eternal One pulsing through all nature, 'like a cannon,' just as we find it throbbing in the work of Jesus. Nature is a child even as Jesus, and is a child by the same Father; and Jesus, always acknowledging His kinship to her, builds His religion on the same Fatherhood as Nature has confessed, and draws His life and power through the same umbilical cord.

It must also be said that sin and guilt, in the system of Jesus, as compared with the question of life, are as pale as they are seen to be in Nature.

They are never primary. He came not to *judge*, but that the world through Him might have *life* (John iii. 14-17). All sin is by comparison of Fatherhood and life-giving treated negatively. Certainly, sin is serious, but the word of Jesus concerning it is, 'It is forgiven.' Jesus has no corroboration of the statement 'Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee : our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.' They need not be removed from the sight of God. The Father does not *judge* man. Therefore, He has never charged man with sin. Man as *son* has alone been in God's thought, but not man as *sinner*. This is the high teaching of the parable of the prodigal son, and parallel to this testimony of Jesus, *the testimony of nature universally is not to sin but to life*. It is the burden of the revelation of nature, even as it is the burden of Jesus' teaching. For the primal instinct confessed by nature is to have life, to hold life, to produce life, to maintain life. Again, we say, this is the primal fact and instinct of Fatherhood. The question of morality, of right and wrong, and punishment of sin, or the vindication of law, or the pardon of guilt, is an infinitesimal one compared to this. The record of millions of years of rape in beast, in savage, in sinner, and in saint, upholds the statement. And Jesus is as insistent as nature is in maintaining as the pre-eminent one in His doctrine the question of life and not that of law. The fuller examination of this topic must, however, be postponed to a subsequent chapter.

The Fatherhood which He reveals is thus the

trunk root of both true religion and true nature. Practically, nature knows nothing else, for all her 'laws' and forms seem subsidiary to her prime passion of life and to the expressions of the Father-function. And to Jesus, the Fatherhood of God is the Alpha and Omega of the message He has to deliver in His life or in His death. Jesus and Nature, that is, speak one message, and that message is of the Father.

There is a risk of confusion, however, in pressing more than the concept of 'life' into the term 'Father.' Some would compel it to mean 'Love' as well as 'Life.' It does not necessarily mean Love, or connote even the meaning of 'Benevolence.' Jesus urges the conception of 'Life' alone as the one high meaning to be found in His revelation of the 'Father.' We should never even approximate to a knowledge of the Father's love, or God's love, but for the primary fact of the Father's life, God's life, which renders His love a possible experience to us. Life must always be the medium of our realization of love, either earthly or heavenly. But when Nature and Human Nature are pressed to yield up an eternal purpose of Love as their ultimate purpose of God, and that as *apart* from a purpose of Life, both spheres can give us nothing but discouragements.

For example, Romanes, in his *Thoughts on Religion* (Pt. I.), makes the following observation. 'There is no one instance of a mechanism or instinct occurring in one species for the exclusive benefit of another species,' and he thence concludes that the Deity has omitted something! 'How

magnificent a display of Divine beneficence,' he exclaims, 'would organic nature have afforded, if all, or even some, species had been so inter-related as to minister to each other's necessities.'

So far as Jesus answers such an interrogation (and 'who knows Jesus Christ, knows the reason of all things,' says Pascal), it would perhaps be in some general form as 'My meat and My drink is to do the Will of Him that sent Me.' He nowhere intimates that either Nature or Human Nature exists for 'benevolence,' as an end, or final purpose; or that their absolute goal is to contribute to happiness. To do the Will of the Father, either in the realm of Nature or of Man, is, according to Jesus, to live, to give life, and to lay life 'down' in the other and new birth. God Himself, so far as we apprehend Him, has done nothing greater than this; and every species, Man included, is in this universe because of this purpose. Jesus, as well as Nature, gives Fatherhood, or communicated life, as the prime end for existence. Instincts, appetites, will—every kind of mechanism or agency conforms finally to this ultimate passion of the Father. 'I am come that ye might have life' is as clearly, we must repeat, the voice of Nature as of Jesus. Not that we may behold the 'Divine Beneficence,' or the Divine Lover, but the Divine Father, and thereby have His Life given to us. And having lived, even for a moment, the Father's Life, there is no higher level of existence to which we could attain by any help or advantage bestowed upon us by any other species. Nothing remains for either man or beast, in the eternities of happen-

ings, than, like Jesus, *to come from, or to go to, the Father*. But this is also the provision of Highest Love. It is the fully declared purpose of Creation, and it is the distinctive note in the teaching of Jesus. The one 'exclusive benefit' which even God has seen good to bestow is to give individual existence, or life. If *His* 'Divine Beneficence,' or abounding Love, cannot be seen, or illustrated in this one fact, it could receive no addition of lustre in any soul from contemplating an inter-relational ministration of species. Jesus has not said, and no more has Nature, 'Ye will not come unto Me that ye may have Love.' His word, like hers, is constantly 'Life.' To know God and Jesus is *Life* Eternal (John xvii. 3).

We, therefore, crave permission to assume that the Creeds,' scientific as well as theological, have done as scant justice to Nature as to Jesus. 'Nature has no Father,' says the scientist; 'Nature has no love,' says the theologian. And both negative the principle which is the very heart of Jesus' system, and which is applied by Him to both man and Nature. The scientist, indeed, accepts the father-function in the *development* and *reproduction* of all life, but denies the Father in its *origin*. He cannot verify the origin! There *must* be fatherhood in the evolution of life, he asserts, for 'life can only come out of life,' but he refuses to call it fatherhood, or to see the Eternal Father behind and beyond the earthly one! The *fatherhood* of all life on earth is, according to science, created 'out of nothing'!

The poet thus speaks for the theologian :

“Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation’s final law—
Tho’ Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shriek’d against his creed.”

But Nature’s ferocity and ravishment are all in the interests of life; and the fury is, in every instance, perhaps, the fury of fatherhood, of begetting life, supporting life, and defending life. It is at bottom the fury of love, and fury for the love of the other, although it may not be the fury of love for *every other*. This would, indeed, be the *divine* and absolute fury of love. Man can only love as far as life relates him.

Nature’s bloodiness and ravening is but a measure of the force of life within her, and the love with which she environs it and maintains it. That there should be agony and death is no indication of lack of love, as we have tried to show. The Fatherhood of the Infinite One must Itself have risen out of such sacrifice of agony and ‘death.’ But it is an indication of the principle and sacrifice which primarily lies in and springs out of fatherhood, and which the Father in Heaven must have been the first to experience. And it is because this hereditation of His life is *in* all things that it carries also this principle of sacrifice within it—a principle which, necessarily, must extend throughout the whole Universe. The raging and ravening life in Nature is the product of the deeper passion of Love, so stupendous in its force as to make the hottest human love appear cold. Where

otherwise does each unit in the Universe obtain its heart-forces, its life-instincts, and sympathies? Does not the pulse in every creature boil out of the great Mother-Reservoir? Every agony in comparison must be no more than the fret and murmur of a wave on the surface of a fathomless sea. All this has an analogue in human experience.

It is not surely necessary to say that on the historic as well as on the natural plane love has been by far the greatest render and ravisher of all powers on the earth. Not only by love of life has this been done, but by love of home, of country, of self, of wealth, of fame, and of all the desires known to the human bosom. When, indeed, has love, if true, been other than an agony? It always devours its object that the two may be one. 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood ye have not life in yourselves.' Was it not simply because of His love that Jesus knew His sufferings? If He had had no love for man, and less for His Father and God, all His agonies would have disappeared and have had no existence. But, as in Nature, all His agony centred *in the impartation of His life* to man through word and work; and love impelled this act of fatherhood. How to become the Father in His person and work, as the Eternal and Absolute had become the Father before Him; how to be on earth and in time what God had been in heaven and in a past eternity; this seems to have been the agony under which Jesus continually laboured. That He was merely suffering under wrath for a vindication of Justice,

because of man's sinfulness, seems an interpretation of His love and life which is totally inadequate and narrow. It degrades the character of the infinite God; it ignores His Fatherhood as Jesus postulates it; it puts Jesus and His work at the small end of the telescope; it puts all eternity and the unseen world into an infinite commotion and distress about something done in time, and renders Nature, history, and human existence a vista of nightmare and perplexity both to God and to man. It also sets law above the Highest, and makes Him coerced by His own word to His surprise and disappointment. It is interpreting down.

CHAPTER III

THE PERSONALITY OF THE FATHER

HIS conception of 'The Father,' based as it is upon the categories of Life and Nature, enabled Jesus to disengage Himself from the entanglements of the exclusive and conventional systems of religion and morality which prevailed in His time, and placed within His power the only method by which a human soul can realize within itself a personalisation of the Eternal. He went back to Nature, and stood upon the deepest fact in existence. Thereby He attained to the Universal. For, without this grasp upon the Universal, religion remains an empty vacuity, and morality a motion with no aim. It is in the presence of the Infinite that all the problems of the human spirit are solved. Devotion itself would die unless it felt the boundless freedom of going forth with the object of its passion 'from everlasting to everlasting.' It is the Infinite which makes it possible for us to *be* all things, 'to bear all things, to believe all things, to hope all things, and to endure all things.' What we vaguely call Existence rises out of it, and again seems to sink down into its deeps.

But it is with the mystery of Existence that the mind of man is perpetually engaged, and only in the light of the Infinite can its unity and purpose be discovered.

In order to comprehend that unity and purpose, somewhat, each thinker takes his own chosen way, the philosopher through the mazes of Mind, the scientist through the realm of Matter, the poet through the abyss of passion. Socrates began the introspective quest when he said, 'Know thyself.' Descartes, in pursuing the quest, said, 'I think, therefore I am'; thus postulating the thinking personality to begin with, and thence concluding himself to be an existence because he could think, or, generally, deducing Being from Thought. These dualities were heired by Kant, who, however, left the problem of their unity unsolved—a task which fell to Hegel, who showed that Being and Thought are unified in the human Self-Consciousness. That is to say, in the 'I am' of our self-consciousness we have both the thought 'I' and the being 'I,' the objective and the subjective: the thing thought as well as the thinker.

Now if we assume Consciousness to rest on Self, and Self-consciousness to rest on Life, we shall come nearer to the position which Jesus postulated, or accepted, in unravelling the problem of Existence. For His problem, though not His terminology, is the same as that of the philosophers. The Infinite is His search, but not as a terminus to Thought, as in their case, but as a pause for all Desire, and it is for this reason that He takes up the categories of Life, and not merely those

of 'Mind' or of 'Matter,' separately considered, in order to reach it once and for all. If Jesus has not done this, He has miserably failed, and the great quest must yet go forward. We believe that Jesus solved the philosophers' problem, the problem of Existence, and by His method was able not only to rest finally upon an Absolute, a Self, a Personality, but to find also in this Personality the secret of all relationship, the fact of Fatherhood. Is it not here, indeed, where both philosopher and scientist fall short of that vital and *personal* Universality which is so deeply desiderated by the human heart in every explanation of Existence?

For the unity of Self-Consciousness is but a part of the quest. To Jesus, the unity of Existence which is given us in Self-Consciousness is not full-orbed unless we are also conscious of the Other-Self in our Self-Consciousness. He does not set the Self as against the Other, the All of Existence, but the Self as only unified in the Other-Self; and He finds no real unity at all in Self until the Self also includes the Other-Self in its Self-Consciousness. 'Thou in Me.' 'I in Thee.' 'I am not alone.' 'Thou in Me.' He transcends the self-contained consciousness of Self, and finds incompleteness of self-consciousness until there is consciousness of the Other-Self in the Self which is conscious. He professes to have this consciousness of the Other-Self in Himself, and implies that there can be no complete 'salvation' for any man until the Other Self-Consciousness is begotten in Him also. The Self by itself is dead. 'I in

them.' He sees, in short, that the absolute processes of Life include also the surrender, and communication of personality in the 'laying down,' or communication of life. 'We will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him.' 'In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.'

Existence, to Jesus, is synonymous with Personality. He never says 'Eternity,' 'Space,' or 'Time,' but simply 'Father.' There is no eternity, nor space, nor time to Him, in the sense so common to us, but only an All-pervasive Personality. On the highest plane of His thought and consciousness, the Father and His Child sum up the All of Relationship. These two concepts, again, are unified by Life, and this unity of all relationship is finally carried up to the Infinite, the Absolute, in His expression, 'God is Spirit.' The modern nomenclature is different, but His meaning is the same. Where the philosophers emphasize Thought, Jesus rests all on Life, with personality as a form of its relatedness. It is the furthest test of Reality, for nothing transcends life. This is concrete, irreducible, universal, necessary, and 'eternal.'

Personality, therefore, is not for Jesus exhausted by what the Self is conscious of for itself. The consciousness of the Other, the Father, is to Him the supreme consciousness, and He assumes it to be the deepest universal consciousness. 'Our Father' can be uttered by every thing in the Universe. It is out of this consciousness that consciousness of Himself dawns. The Father

dwells in Him (John x. 38; xiv. 10, 11, 20). It is this consciousness that begets in Himself the consciousness of being a personal relatedness, a Child, a Son. The content of personality means more to Jesus than a self-contained, self-identifying Unit, or One distinct by its consciousness of Self from every other One which is also conscious of its own self-identity. It is a Pervasion by One of every other One. This is accomplished by the medium of a common Life pervading All. Consciousness of our own personality gives us also a consciousness of life beyond all personality. And, in this absolute Life, personality blends into personality, each with all, and all with each, as cloud blends with cloud, as the life of the seed with the life of the tree and the forest, as the light of the candle with the light of the sun, or as the drop of water from the sky mingles with the waters of the ocean. The Father does not give to Jesus His Life merely; He also gives to Him His own Personality in the Life, and thereby gives to an eternal the conditions of temporality. And thereby, also, Jesus realizes Himself as a Father as truly as He realizes Himself as a Son. 'The Father abiding in Me doeth His works.' 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.'

Perhaps we should venture to think that in the circle of Jesus' thoughts the Eternal Spirit enters Finitude in the Personality of the Father. The Life and Personality of the Father become 'flesh' or the Life and Personality of Jesus, and the Life and Personality of Jesus become again the Holy Spirit. Life is one in all, but Personality

is its motion, in perpetual development of persons. 'I and My Father are one': the Spirit proceedeth from the Father through the Son (John xiv. 26). 'If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you.' Personality is in an eternal condition of transformation under the powers of Life, which is one. Every personality is a form of the Father's sacrifice in laying down His Life in His begotten, and passes onwards as wave passes into wave across an endless sea. No Self, except for purposes of thought, can be considered truly as one.

In the same way Jesus Himself gives His personality to Man. He gives it in giving them His Life, even as He Himself received the Father-personality in receiving the Father-Life. 'I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.' Again, the sacrifice of personality is involved in the sacrifice of Life, out of which personality emerges. He emphasizes this fact in His great statement, 'Except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone, but if it die, it beareth much fruit.' To abide 'alone,' as a unit personality, would be the Grand Death. Jesus pictures 'hell' as one abiding alone. To give up the Life, and personality in that Life, is to walk with the Father, and the Son, and to realize wider life and, therefore, wider personality, and so to approximate to Oneness with the Father. 'That they all may be One, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us.' 'For, as we have seen,' says the Master of Balliol (Prof. Ed. Caird), in his *Hegel* (p. 218), 'the communication of life, which is involved in the idea of such a

Being, cannot stop short of the communication of a *self*, and so of *Himself* to His creatures, which are thus "made partakers of the divine nature." 'Christianity teaches,' he says, 'that the law of the life of spirit—the law of self-realization through self-abnegation—holds good for God as for man, and, indeed, that the spirit that works in man to "die to live" is the Spirit of God.' And while Self-Consciousness is thus necessary to a personality, to Jesus it seems that it is as necessary to have a consciousness of the Other in the conscious Self, or to be conscious of another Self *in* our own. All personalities are begotten from and within the Father-God, analogously to the seeds which are formed from and within the father-fruit—the vastitude of all personalities ultimately aggregating in 'One,' changing in one another and in Him, under the power of the one eternal Life, even as the 'rings' in the trunk aggregate, change, and expand in the one tree, or as the electrons mass and move within the atom. Every life-cell in the human blood is a latent human personality.

Jesus thus begins and ends with the fact of Life. There is no abstraction in His system. 'The Father hath life.' 'I am the Life.' 'Because I live ye shall live.' 'I give unto them eternal life.' And because of His Life in them, He is in them and with them to the end of the world.

The universal consciousness bears testimony that if life be not real, nothing is so. It was the thing that lay nearest to Him as to every one, and is the least decomposable category conceivable.

Moreover, we search in vain through the entire field of history to find a single other soul who had such unshaken faith in life, and in its Personal Fountainhead. He never doubted that the Reality which He declared did make all other things possible of reality. He assumes that this fact should be patent to every one. 'If ye had known Me, ye would have known My Father also.' 'Whither I go ye know the way.'

He assumes in the most fearless way the Personality of the Supreme Being. This Personality He names 'Father.' He has nothing else to declare save this 'Name.' All is secondary and subservient to the Nature and Character of the Infinite One, of which the Father-'Name' is the symbol word. But His postulate of Life leads Him to embrace all things that have life within this Fatherhood, and, likewise, subordinately, all Nature lying beyond man. The sun, for example, is not defined as God's but the *Father's* sun, shining upon the evil and the good under His benign direction. It is *the Father* who cares for the sparrows, the lilies and the grass. As a mere generalization, indeed, He finds the data of Personal Fatherhood in every creature in the Universe.

There is thus a presupposition that Jesus regarded the entrance of 'The Father' upon the arena of existence as synonymous with the 'Beginning' of all Creation. For all must have come forth from the womb of Life. 'The Father hath Life in Himself,' are words that give horizons, for the first time, to the Absolute Immensity. They preclude any other Source of Life, and

declare this 'Father' to be the true Antecedent of the All of existence.

In so thinking, we seem but to follow Jesus in a path which was familiar to Him. God is conceived by Him as moving through the same conditions for Himself as those into which He has plunged His creature Man. God realizes Himself even as man does, and becomes Father through communicated life by the same influences of love from which all fatherhood draws its existence. 'The law of the life of spirit—the law of self-realization through self-abnegation—*holds good for God as for man,*' says Prof. E. Caird, already quoted. 'The spirit that works in man to "die to live" is the Spirit of God.' It is the new-coming but not yet come young life out of man and beast that creates the home and builds the nest. And such universal experience on the plane of Time must surely have had its precedent experience on the shoreless expanse of Infinitude, when God in the vastness of His eternal love moved in Himself to share His being, His life, and His endless glory with His Begotten, the Universe. All life-experience is, therefore, God-experience. We believe that this view is held in solution in the teaching of Jesus. His own life in the flesh, His works and words, directly imply that a Father's love is the ultimate cause of all creation, the First and the Last of the motions of the Everlasting, and the supreme and final Imperative in the destiny of Man.

Jesus thus interprets the great question of Personality through the greater postulate of Life. The two things are inseparable. 'The Father hath

life in Himself.' 'I, Jesus, am the Life.' Both fill the conscious and unconscious hemispheres of man's moonlike existence. The known and the unknown, the dark and the bright, are rounded by these two into unity, the unity of finite being; a unity which again finds its absolute in the higher unity of the Infinite Spirit.

The ladder of thought which Jesus thus employs does not seem difficult to apprehend. He begins with Himself, the Man, the Son of Man, and says, 'I am the Life.' He binds up Life and Personality together, co-ordinately. Then He ascends to the source of this life. 'As the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son also to have life in Himself.' In both centres of life He also finds personality. But He still ascends. The Father is 'God,' and seeks to be worshipped (John iv. 23). And to crown His highest reach of conception He says, 'God is Spirit.' In this expression, however, it is evident that we have Something more given us than is wrapt up in the ideas of Personality and Life. Both conceptions clearly find a higher unity in the terms 'God is Spirit.' We believe that it is the utmost of all relationship as taught by Jesus. There is here, however, no negation of either life or personality. Both are affirmed, rather, in One; and on the farthest off verge of Jesus' vision of Existence, Personality and Life are beheld receding into the absolute of Spirit. He emphasizes the sacred sequence in John xx. 27: 'I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'

Jesus thus affirms where the philosophers deny. 'The supposition of a Supreme Being or Cause,' says Kant in his immortal *Critique*, 'is purely relative; it is cogitated only in behalf of the systematic unity of experience; such a being is but a something of whose existence in itself we have not the least conception.' 'We can never have the least conception of this being, or of its absolute necessity.' Hume, before Kant, had said, 'We have no idea of the Supreme Being but what we learn from reflection on our own faculties' (*Inquiry*, etc., Sec. VII.).

This, of course, is only one of many minor bars in the prolonged dirge of the 'Personality of the Infinite' of modern times, with its perpetually wailing variations on the theme, 'Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection?'

To Jesus, God as He is 'in Himself' is God as He is in Man. His grand purpose is not to urge man to comprehend the Incomprehensible, but to establish a relationship between the Incomprehensible and Man, on a basis of the consciousness of life and the facts of Nature, in order that man may attain to that condition of perfection in the Incomprehensible which is defined by the divine Fatherhood (Matt v. 45). This relationship He undoubtedly assumed for Himself, and through His descent from the Father He also assumed Himself to have reached the perfection of the Father. 'I do always the things that please Him,' He affirmed. 'I and the Father are One.' 'Even

as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father.'

But what Jesus did for Himself He declared He was doing for all men. To save the world was His task. He had, therefore, to create the same faith in men which He Himself held regarding the Personality of the Father. His faith was, that in life and person the Father was in Himself—Jesus. This faith had to be begotten in Man also; and His teaching, His example, and His works are all bent to effect this result. For His object is not to found knowledge in the soul as an end in itself, but to make all knowledge the soil on which to rear faith in His Father. And His method is to take the knowledge and faith which men already possess of their own personalities and use it to create knowledge and faith regarding the Personality of God. He leads men by the known facts of relationships already experienced. Hence, even as He uses Himself, and the experience of His own life, to reach His own faith in the personality of the Father-God, so He also begins with the child, any child, and the fact of its communicated life and personality, in order to widen faith in the divine Fatherhood to the whole race of man, and so to make it real and reasonable for all to say, 'Our Father.'

On the wider plane of Hebrew history the personality of the Eternal Being is seen under very different conditions. The conception of the personality of the God Jehovah, or Yahwé, which confronted Jesus in the faith and sacred books of the Hebrews, stands out in vivid contrast to that

of the personality whom He calls 'My God, My Father.'

Than the Hebrews, perhaps no people have so vividly realized God as a Personality. They believed in Yahwé with controversy and passion. It would be incorrect, however, to assert that their Deity so realized was, unlike that of Jesus, always conceived under the same aspects of Form, Power, Habitation, Nature, and Character. On the contrary, these all passed through changes under a well-marked psychological stress which rose out of their social circumstances and national sufferings, combined with a deep conviction of the severely Divine Power which directed their race.

For example, one distinct but unfortunate trend of the Hebrew mind was to widen the distance between their Deity and Man, then again between Him and the earth, and finally between Him and the Universe. From having His abode in a garden, in familiar personal converse with man, He was exalted to dwell above the firmament, which was conceived then as solid; and ultimately, in process of time, He was discerned, in the period after the Exile, as resident outside of the Universe altogether, beyond the heaven of heavens, which could not contain Him (2 Chronicles vi. 18). The Deity thus underwent a process of transcendence in space. Like a planet receding into space, the Deity was conceived, in the diminishing perspective of lapsing ages, as slowly vanishing from the eyes of men, from the seen into the unseen, from the finite into the infinite. From habitual, friendly, and daily association with man in Eden, He is only occasion-

ally, and with dread, beheld by Abraham and Jacob; but to Moses and Elijah, again, He is not so much *seen* as *perceived* in the bush, in the pillar of cloud, and in the raging operations of Nature's forces. By the times of Moses and Elijah He has also receded out of the human form that Abraham and Jacob saw, and becomes more and more detached from the human in particular, requiring all the imposing objects of Nature in general to define Him, until when we come down to Ezekiel's days, the time of the Exile, the Hebrew Deity is seen as an appalling and weird spectacle, multitudinous in mass and movement, an enthralling conglomerate formless-form of wings and faces, wheels and flames (Ezek. i.). Perhaps, in the Old Testament we ought to discriminate two distinct theistic conceptions pervading the consciousness of the Hebrew people, viz. the Personality of the Patriarchal God, and the sterner Personality of the God who dwelt at Horeb. Each throws a divine influence wide and deep over the Sacred Books, but clearly the Patriarchal God remains the God of the Prophets and in general of the Psalms, while the God of the Priesthood and the Temple is the God of Moses and Elijah.

Again, and of necessity, as He is conceived as receding afar from all social and personal intercourse with men, and only portentous in rare crises in Hebrew affairs, His communications with that race are conducted more and more through angelic messengers, and those whom He 'sends' from time to time. Moreover, His own personal Nature and Character undergo profound mutations. He

becomes, for example, increasingly introspective and self-conscious, more jealous to be promptly and strictly obeyed, and repetitively assertive of His unique and awful holiness (see 'P.' (Priestly Code) portions of the Hexateuch). He sets sin more impatiently in the light of His countenance.

Nevertheless, while throughout the chequered course of Israelitish history the Hebrew God Yahwé is so apprehended as undergoing transformations in appearance, locality, nature, and character, perpetual exaltation, and extending imperium, He is never disrobed of personality. He is never resolved, for example, into an impersonal Power, an abstract Idea, or into such an entity as 'Nature.' The reason governing these transformations is doubtless to be found in the fierce sense of sin which ever swept through the consciousness of the covenanted race like the flaming sword of Eden. For, under every condition, it seems morally impossible for anyone to retain a feeling of having sinned against, or of needing pardon from, an Impersonality. When Deity becomes a mere personless Force or Motion, all the moral hammers of the inner consciousness soon also lie still and innocuous on the anvil of the human soul. There is no sense of sin. But the Hebrews always possessed this sense in an unbounded measure. And it is in this same sin-sense that we should perhaps seek for the true altering factor in all the transformations of their theistic conceptions. It is because the sin-sense is itself transformed that under its influence the conceptions of Deity change likewise. In the incipient stage,

after the golden age had passed, man conceived himself, when he compared himself with Nature around him, as weak, imperfect, miserable, and subject to death. He concluded, in the sense of pain engendered so, that he must be under punishment, and that, consequently, he must have wronged the Gods in some unconscious way. This conviction at once put distance between himself and Deity, for the Gods could not consort with guilt and uncleanness. All intercourse must henceforth be done through 'holy' men, or priests.

But when man also found that he could apprehend sin not only in himself, but in the very earth, the Elohim must necessarily be still further removed into the heavens to satisfy his assurance of their holiness. The virtue of which man persistently denudes himself he bequeathes to his Gods. They must be preserved pure. They must not come near to the unclean thing. But when later ages found it possible to yet further intensify sin as being not only in man, and in the earth, but also in all matter, the Elohim received a necessary exaltation above the Universe itself. The Hebrew Yahwé Elohim was then said, in modern terms, to 'transcend' Nature. And it is in this transcendent state, with His very 'Name' rased from the memories of men, that Jesus found the conception of the Hebrew Theistic Personality on His entrance into the world. No doubt the 'Immanence' of God is declared in such isolated references as Psalm cxxxix., but to the Hebrew People as a race, God was ever a God afar off.

Jesus, in realizing God as a Personality to

Himself and to His generation, adopts a method of doing so completely the reverse of that which is found in the Old Testament. He brings God from the infinite down into the finite, from beyond the heaven of heavens to proximate with the very children on the earth. The 'Father'-name which He insists upon for this realization is also subversive of that awful deistic conception of God which grew up in the Hebrew mind. Moreover, His presentation of God's nature and character is so fundamentally different from that favoured in the Sacred Writings of Israel, that a considerable body of opinion prevailed in the early Christian Church, and was forcibly maintained by Marcion, that the God of Jesus could not be the same as the God of Israel. 'Even the God of Philo was no longer the old living God of Israel' (Harn. *Hist. of Dog.* i. 114, 115; Hatch's *Hib. Lects.*, 1888, 2nd Ed., 227).

In Jesus' first announcement, 'The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand,' we see His resolution to obliterate that falsity of distance which had been put between the Eternal One and His children. It was a necessary step. He employs their expectation of a Messiah, a 'Sent' one, to teach them the nearness of the Sender Himself. God's nearness to the earth is affirmed in His personal care of the sparrows, the clothing of the grass, and the numbering of the hairs of the head. All prayer is to be made to Him directly in person. Far from God having shunned the Universe, the earth, or man, Jesus seeks to impress the human mind with the contrary fact, viz. that the Eternal Being

has through all time acted towards His creation, and especially towards man, as a woman acts in seeking for a lost piece of money, as a shepherd acts in seeking for a lost sheep, or as a father acts in running to meet a son who has gone away from him (Luke xv.).

This new conception of God as a Proximate Presence in space, and an Identity among men, necessarily changed the whole scope of religion. God was henceforth possible of being conceived as both visible and invisible, Man and Maker, Human and Divine, and this conception founded a personal relationship between man and God which inevitably reflected itself through all human belief and action, doctrine and duty. But it was the personality of Jesus which naturally became the first step in man's ascent to Godhood. And, as an actual fact, no man *can* come to realize the Father-God except through Jesus. Men saw Jesus, but they also saw the Father-God, for 'He that hath seen Me, hath seen the Father also.' It is, therefore, through the personality of Jesus that the Personality of the Eternal One must be realized. In the conception of the Hebrews, the personality of God had become divided from man by all the breadth of the Universe, and Jesus in closing this gulf between Man and Deity, did so by making Himself, His own personality, the Identity of both.

It is from this point of view that we understand His going back upon the natural instincts of mankind, and vindicating the ancient faith of aboriginal man that one can actually 'see God.' 'He who is from God, he hath seen the Father,' and as

God is Father to all, all are from Him, and may see Him. In short, Jesus teaches that the Eternal One may be always as truly seen as the Human One, if the conditions of vision in the spirit are fulfilled similarly to those in the body. God ought to be an object to the eye, a thought to the mind, and a spirit to the spirit. Every person may see the Personality of God in some form, although it is chiefly characteristic of the 'pure in heart' that they see Him as Jesus saw Him.

Again, as the transcendence of Deity above the Universe was chiefly effected by the Hebrew conception of sin, so the nearness of Deity to, and His identification with, Man, was accomplished by Jesus in substituting the Father's Life and Love in its place. Jesus reiterates the Love of the Father over every chord in His harp of Life, but He never directly mentions God's mind on sin. In His mouth there seems to be no affirmation on sin as coming from that Personality. The Christian Church obtains this directly through the Apostolic teaching from the Old Testament. For Jesus comes with no mandate to 'judge the world.' The reason is that the Father Himself judgeth no man. That is, He did not count sin to man; a fact potently emphasized in the parable of the prodigal son. The Personality of God, as it comes to us in the Personality of Jesus, and is made objective in the 'little child,' has not the sin of man set in the light of its countenance. There is Love, and Life begotten of Love, and the Light of that Life, but there is no judgment on sin.

The Personality of God thus became to the

Hebrews transcendent in space, and abstractly objective to the soul. To the moderns God is abstractly subjective, but transcendent to thought, though, at the same time, immanent in and 'rolling through all things.' To such as Spencer and Huxley, God is far above all understanding, 'unknown and unknowable,' while to a Tennyson He is 'nearer than hands and feet.' He is conceived as both immanent in Nature, yet transcending it as Spirit, which rises above Nature, and makes of it a process to the higher spiritual life (E. Caird's *Evolution of Religion*, II., 117). The modern mind in this way views Nature as something into which, at will, God can descend, or again transcend. Nature, consequently, is tacitly assumed to be limited. The old dialectical division of the All into Spirit and Matter is sustained. We regard this as the Arch-Error.

Jesus knows no such conception of Nature. The modern view of the Universe and of Nature is not found in His mind. He only knows and recognizes a Person who is the Source of All that is, and who is Himself that All. Under the aspect of Life God is 'The Father,' who is likewise Spirit, which Jesus assumes to be limitless (John iv. 21-24). Jesus addresses all things as having the Father's Life, and assumes the Father as being in the Life of all. 'The Lord of heaven and earth' is His definition of God in His sphere of Power, but it is the '*Father*' who is this 'Lord'; and Jesus thus gives the Father-Life as the acting source of this lordship. Whenever, indeed, the thought of Jesus travels from Himself into space, near or far, it

reaches only a Person, the Father-God. So far as this Person gives limits to human thought, so far to Jesus is 'Nature' limited, but as this Person is also Spirit (John iv. 23, 24), the conception of 'Nature' must be made to coincide with whatever conception of spirit we may venture to form. Briefly, as Jesus uses the terms 'heaven and earth' to indicate a whole, this may be regarded as His equivalent to our 'Universe,' but when we seek for His corresponding term for our 'Nature,' the only possible equivalent is 'The Father.' We hope to make this clearer in a future chapter.

Now, although, strictly speaking, Jesus never discards the moral and spiritual faculties in His interpretation of the Personality of God, the reasoning powers of the intellect are fully laid under tribute for the same purpose, and He likewise bases both, as we think, in the materiality of the 'little child.'

No other data, it is evident, than that which is given in the human life and personality, communicated both to Himself and to all the new-born, could have justified His conception of the 'Father'-God, for no data lives so profoundly in our consciousness of reality, or is so universal in the common experience of both man and of all living things.

The child has, as far as a conception of personality is possible to us, all the elements in itself, material, mental, and spiritual, for the construction of such an idea. And by the fact of the child being a child, his relations to a father are proved, and as such are admitted to the universal faith.

He could not be a child otherwise. For the child is a product not of mere matter, nor of thought only, but of life, which transcends both. Jesus, therefore, completes His ladder of thought and faith, and raises it from earth to heaven, when He shows it to be also a path of Life, with the Child as its base in this world, and the Father-God as its rest in eternity. And He has given us the amazing vision of its soaring heights in these words, 'Whosoever shall receive this little child in My name receiveth Me, and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me.' Wherever the child is found, there is also found the life and personality of a Father, and as Jesus aimed above all things to reveal the Father to the world, it was the most natural thing that He should set the child in the centre of His system, and declare him to be the true representative of both Himself, the Son of man, and the Father-God of all men.

By the very nature of things, indeed, Jesus' conception of the Personality of God as a 'Father' was impossible to either faith or reason, before the child was postulated as the necessary basis of both. The 'Kingdom of the Father' begins with the communication of His life and personality to the child.

This is then Jesus' method of forming to reason and faith a conception of the Personality of the Supreme Being. He takes up the child—Himself, or any child, and begins from the concrete. He carries along with Him the evidence of the senses. All *know* the child. All *believe* him to be a personality. The child is seen, and believed, and

accepted to be, as a being, all that man in personality is, was, or shall be. Jesus thus finds in all men a faith in personality already founded so far. It is a universal method of mind. The child's relatedness to a father is likewise received as resting necessarily on the fact of the concrete life of the child. And His conclusion is that, if all are children, then there must be a Father of all, whose relations to all must be identical with the individual relation of any child to its earthly father. The relation is the same in both cases, viz. one of communicated life.

And thus, so far as it is possible to prove any truth by experience and by the 'hard test of verification,' Jesus places the Personality of the Father, and His relationship to the personality of man, on the soundest and most reasonable foundations.

Unless we are to assume that He merely made a gracious guess at the relationship of God to man as being that of a Father, there is no escape from the conclusion that He had made it certain both to His own faith and reason on a basis of the postulate of communicated child-life and personality. That God as Father was a popular belief among Jesus' contemporaries, as Dalman assures us (*Words of Jesus*, Kay's Trans., 188), gave no new element to Jesus in His statement of His system, for it cannot be denied that such a sentiment, or instinct, must have existed, either actively or passively, from the dawn of human consciousness. Kant's magnificent despair of ever being able to cogitate a conception of the existence of a Supreme Being, as well as Augustine's assurance

that this Supreme Being had made the human heart for Himself, are only superb expressions of the negative and affirmative currents in the vast stream of that universal consciousness, which comes to all in the gift of communicated Life.

Jesus went back to Nature. He founded His system upon Life. His faith in the personal Fatherhood of God thus acquired a passion of conviction as profound as that faith which He had in His own personality. It is a faith which has its root and power of growth not only in the general consciousness, but in reason also, and in the common evidence of the senses. His own consciousness of personality, indeed, seems often lost in that of His Father. He finds the Father doing His works, speaking His thoughts, sympathetic of His sufferings; and is conscious in all ways of this Other, the Father, rather than of Himself, the Son. Where all thinkers walk and speak in the most doubtful mind, Jesus rings out His declaration of the Father's Personality and Presence in a voice more deeply assured than any one perhaps ever permitted himself to employ regarding the existence of himself.

And it is a faith which the universal experience of Christendom, as well as the subconsciousness of the race of man, has verified as having given a new vitality to the world, and to humanity a new heaven and a new earth. No enthusiasm known to the human heart equals in intensity and power that inspired fervour which creates a world-wide maelstrom round the personality of Jesus. His revelation of the Father-personality of God has

practically called the human spirit out of the region of the shadow of death.

Yet this enthusiasm was not new to human experience. It was only new to religious feeling. It always existed in the passion of the child for the parent. Jesus only began with religion where Nature begins with life. He united both, indeed, and carried His religion and His own child-nature up into the personality of His Father; and the most efficient support for His faith in the personality of the Eternal Being is not found by Him in the categories of mind, but in the experience of every man when the deep vital instincts of his nature command him. For unconsciously, but unhesitatingly, every human passion trends towards realizing itself at its best, and at last, in a relationship which cannot be defined by any other terms than those used by Jesus—'That ye may be SONS of your Father' (Matt. v. 45).

It is this instinct or passion which is strongest and most prominent in all Jesus does and says. As hinted above in page 23, it also rendered it possible for St. John to see in Jesus one who was 'God Only-Begotten' (John i. 18) (Westcott and Hort, and best ancient authorities). He is conscious of being the nearest related thing that the Eternal Being knows, and, because He is a child, the first that God knew, and all that man can know of God. He could thereby place Himself in the focal centre of the human vision of the Infinite One, and through Himself radiate all that light to the human soul which composes man's ideal of Deity. Jesus is in this way God to man, for man can apprehend

no higher conception of Deity ; but being conscious also of His being the Father's Child, He is not God to Himself, and still less is He God to God. But He is to man, necessarily, a God Only-Begotten.

Now all other Gods before Jesus were Gods unbegotten, and mere ideal detachments from humanity, having nothing in themselves of man. The ' God ' and man shared no common life. They were in reality personifications of some part or force of Nature, and were created in the human idea, thought, or fancy. To the Hebrews, ' God ' was a progression from the working Deity of Eden to the ruling Deity of Moses, ending finally in the ' Righteous ' Deity of the Prophets and the ' Holy ' Deity of the Priesthood. The same progression is found in all the ancient religions. God, throughout the vast periods before Jesus, is ever adumbrated as coming to birth, but He is never a *begotten* God until Jesus enters the world as a little child. Men then find it easy to apprehend God through the facts of personal human life. And necessarily He is so apprehended as a Father-God. There is not on the plane of all existence a more transcendent ' revelation ' of the Eternal Being than is to be seen in the Son of Man. Jesus inferiorizes Yahwé, and all other Gods, and in nature and character is the loftiest thing we can conceive of as divine. He is, therefore, the only possible God, as a personal Objective of worship; and He is also the only ' God-begotten ' to man through the facts of human life. He is for all time the only born God, and it is not

more necessary for man, in the interests of true worship, to regard Him as divine, than to think of Him also as a Child of the Eternal Father. Any other object of worship which can be set up in the human mind has no valid reality *as a Person*.

And as He had been begotten and not merely made, Jesus was conscious that His existence was Father-existence, and His life Father-life. Here was felt and realized for the first time among men that common pulse of One Life which flows between the Infinite God and the God-child which He, as Father, has begotten and sent into this world. Here Jesus realized the Unity of His own and of all existence, and knew the Father-God in the knowing of Himself. He, the Child, revealed the Father, for, said He, 'He that hath seen ME hath seen the Father' (John xiv. 9).

Jesus thus stands apart from the two extremes which have characterized all efforts, ancient and modern, to grasp the conception of personality either in the finite or Infinite. The ancients drew largely on the suggestions of Nature, the moderns dwell chiefly on Thought. Both land us in abstractions of Deity. No human heart, for example, can now intelligently accept 'God' as He is developed through the books of the Old Testament as a true and adequate personalization of the Spirit he would adore, and just as impossible is it to receive, as 'God,' Hegel's 'Absolute Idea,' Arnold's 'Eternal not ourselves,' Schopenhauer's 'Will,' Fichte's 'Moral Order,' or the 'Unknown and Unknowable' of the recent philosophico-scientists. Neither in the one nor in the other do

we find any consciousness of our own personality. It is because there is no vibration of common life between our own souls and these Deities. If they exist, they exist impersonally, far from us. We are not their *children* even if they have 'made' us. For they have not known a father's feelings, and passion; *they have never laid down their life in us*, nor sacrificed their being to beget a new personality, and cannot, therefore, be worshipped by us in personal spirit and personal truth.

For, it is clear, that if the personality of either the finite or the Infinite is to be realized at all, it cannot be done by the scientific methods of observation and demonstration, or by the philosophic canons of the mind, but by the exercise of that faith which, as Bishop Westcott truly says, 'is the absolute condition of all life, of all action, of all thought which goes beyond the limitations of our own minds' (*Historic Faith*, Lect. I.).

The scientist, for example, to whom the modern world owes the deepest debt of admiration and gratitude, and many apologies from the theologians, brings to his study of the Universe a mind void of all encumbering bias. He begins with semblance, advances to energy, states law, but fails everywhere to discover a personal Deity. By similar methods the anatomist dissects a body, classifies its parts, divides its important functions into those which regulate breath, blood, and brain, but he discovers no thought, or trace of any feeling.

The mental scientist, again, assumes the facts of Nature and Mind, and thence passing along the ontological, cosmological, teleological, and other

correlated lines of thought, rationalizes being, energy, causation, will; but also fails to discover the fact of facts, a Personality. This, as Kant tells us, can only be a mere 'persuasion' on our part. 'Our belief in a personal God is based upon an instinct,' says Illingworth (*Personality, Human and Divine*, iv.). That is, it transcends thought as such. Prof. Knight, again, can only find 'hints of a personality that is girding and enfolding ours' in the Moral Imperative (*Personality and the Infinite*).

Indeed, every serious investigation to discover the Personality of God seems to be similar to beginning to pull thread from a spool, expecting the thread by and by, as it is unrolled, to evolve itself into muscle, blood, nerve, life, and then personality. On the contrary, it always ends thread, as it begins. Philosophy begins with a thought, and it ends in a thought. There is no concrete reality, and consequently no personality as an ultimate. For however we may accept Self-Consciousness as the Ideal Unity, as Hegel affirms, and call it the final product of philosophy, we yet are no nearer reality. For Self-Consciousness, of itself, is but a *motion* of the Self, and not the actual Self. It is, doubtless, supposed by some that the personality within us can turn round on itself and make itself the object of its own contemplation, but, in actual performance, to do this would be just as easy as for the eye to turn round and look at its self, or for the ear to turn about to hear its self!

Even if it were possible to 'see' our own person-

ality in this reflective manner, we should still find it impossible to reach the Personality of God. For, as Prof. Knight states it, there is no path 'by which one may pass from the notions of the intellect to the realities of the universe beyond it.' The Personality of the Eternal Being may be suggested, and even adumbrated and 'Named,' as it was by the ancient religions, and it may also be assumed as a working hypothesis by thinking men, but in actual result, there is no possible *knowledge* of the personality of either man or God by the categories of Mind. It can only be taken up into the mind through faith, which itself rests on the unknown, and often unconscious, categories of Life.

This was the method adopted by Jesus. He began with personality, as a faith. He took initiative from that faith in the personality of the child which holds a universal acceptance from all men, and through that faith He carried both the faith and knowledge of others, as well as His own faith and knowledge of personality, upwards into the Personality of the Father. He stated the problem of personality, not in terms of natural phenomena, like the Hebrew, nor in the categories of mind, like the philosophers, but in terms of life. For the known and the Unknown are as much bound up in the person of the child, *i.e.* man, as they are in the Person of God, and Jesus aimed at no more than creating in men a faith in the Personality of God similar to that faith which they have in their own, that is, the personality of the child. No more than this is necessary to effect a relation-

ship between the finite and infinite, or super-finite, as close as it is satisfying to both experience and the deepest human instincts. In reality, the 'Personality of the Infinite' is a 'devout imagination' apart from its expression in the 'Father' of Jesus.

The reason is apparent. We have as children all the experientiality of a father latent in our nature, but of the Infinite we have no experientiality at all. Consequently, the latter is not a possible object of knowledge or of reason. We can think the Father because we can think the Child, but we cannot think the Infinite because we cannot think Spirit. Again, we can only think the Infinite in as far as we can think the Father-God, for our thought then rests in the connotations and experience of a common life; or, in other words, we can think the Infinite only in as far as the Infinite becomes for us the Finite in Fatherhood. All other conceptions of 'God' must be considered as amiable Spectra of luminous and devout imaginations. For it is never a case of the finite mind apprehending the Infinite Being, but of finite man apprehending the finitude of the Infinite as it is manifested to all in their experience of that life which reveals His Fatherhood. The child could not be finite, nor could Jesus have been the Son of Man, unless the Infinite had first become finite in Fatherhood.

And because our deepest consciousness is that which springs from life, Jesus, in giving the name of 'Father' to the Infinite Being, exhausted in the human heart every latency, or possible

tendency, to otherwise name the Eternal in the future history of the race. Without completely emptying this life-consciousness, every name of the infinite Spirit must necessarily be transient and temporary. It is because the connotations of the child, that is, of the Father, are omitted in all other 'Names' of God except that given by Jesus, that no personalization of God has been other than unsatisfactory to human beings in the course of religious history. This was inevitable. The 'Almighty,' for example, the 'Creator,' the 'Judge,' and many others, are only conceivable as connoting personality in as far as we first put the connotations of the child into our thinking of them. If we abstract these child connotations of life and birth, and Fatherhood, these names do not express personality at all. They stand only for Functions, Powers, or Agencies. 'El,' 'Yahwé,' 'Elohim,' may mean anything, but personality they cannot assert until we first bring into them the personality of man, that is, the personality of the child. Even the name 'I Am,' though it seems to connote personality, fails to connote *communicated* life, or Fatherhood, and stands sublimely apart by its self as an Isolation. It never passes over from its self to anything or to anyone. It is related to its self alone.

And how supremely important a true conception of God becomes to a people is conspicuously illustrated in this last example. For the conception of this exclusive Being, the 'I Am,' necessarily reflected, and does still reflect, its nature and temperament through the entire history

and development of the Hebrew people, seeing that man always assimilates himself to his Gods. It was just this assertion of unrelatedness that made, and does yet make, the religion of the Old Testament an impossible one for the universal acceptance of mankind. And, by implication, this feature is the most glaring form of falsity in it. For, according to Jesus, the Eternal is related to all, and that by ties that are closer than soul is to body. And perhaps it is because the relationship between the Infinite Being and all men is fixed by Jesus in the basal integrities of life, and is thereby one to be named of Father and Child, that no other conception of the Personality of the Infinite is conceivable as a new and necessary creation for the human mind. Relationship cannot ascend higher than where Jesus has placed it. It reaches the infinitudes and sums up all desire. It meets the wants of every hunger and thirst in the human experience, it explains all history, it interprets all the phenomena of Nature by her highest power of life, and exhausts every Ideal of mortal existence.

We believe we are thus justified in maintaining that to conceive God as a Person, it is necessary to conceive Him as a Father, after the method of Jesus, for by the data given us in the child alone, is Personality attributable to the Eternal Being. *It is only through the fact of the child, that is, of Fatherhood, that it is possible to know God as a Personality.*

The facts upon which Jesus thus based His system, and which He found universally admitted

by man, were—first, the Child; second, the Personality of the Child springing up out of its life; and, third, the parent source of the Child's life, the Father. From these facts as His data, He reasons upwards to the Original Father of all His Children, and finds the same relationship unbroken and unchanged. Moreover, as this Original Father is also to be worshipped, and is identical with God who is 'Spirit,' and, therefore, the Unknown, it follows that the Way to the Father is the Way to the Infinite, who, although most truly Unknown under that category, is yet by Fatherhood forever and continually being made known through the revelation of Himself in the Child, and in the Children whom He has begotten.

On such a broad and invulnerable foundation Jesus could not but build for all time, and find a sure acceptance in the faith of all mankind; for, as has been said by Sir Oliver Lodge, 'Whatever worthy attribute belongs to man, be it personality or any other, its existence in the Universe is thereby admitted; we can deny it no more' (*Hib. Jour.*, Jany., 1903, p. 215). And, indubitably, it is upon this undeniable Personality in man, that is to say, in the child, that Jesus rears His superstructure of faith in the Personality of His Father-God. For whosoever receives this child receives Jesus, and whosoever receives Jesus, receives God who sent Him.

CHAPTER IV

THE CHILD-FAITH

THE two grand generalizations declared by Jesus were, then, as we have tried to show: (1) The Eternal One personalized in the Father; and (2) the Father begotten in each child aggregating to a boundless 'Kingdom.' In Life both are universalized, and in the child both are born into the world, and clothed with finitude. Jesus sets the child 'in the midst' of His system, as truly as He placed him in the midst of His disciples of old. Moses is said to have seen the Eternal in a burning bush, and Elijah to have heard Him in a still, small voice. Jesus both saw and heard the Eternal Father in the little child. And that not for a brief spasmodic moment, as of a mystery grudgingly revealed, never more to be manifest to men in time; but as One to be with men always, even to the end of the world. In the silly and the simple He discerned the Eternal Solemnity; in the fragile, the Almighty; in the most imperfect, the pattern of the world's desire, the perfect life; and in the thing begotten in 'shame' and 'uncleanness' and 'lust,' the sole Image and Minister of the Most

Holy. Love can alone see the Lovely, and as Jesus saw the child with a father's eyes and a mother's heart, He also saw the Truth, and the world was transformed before Him, even as He Himself became transfigured, in His vision.

The child is to Jesus the Nexus and the Centre of all permanent relationship existing between earth and heaven. For it is not the much-vaunted 'Brotherhood,' but Childhood, which sums up His Ideal with regard to Man universally perfected. God only has to do with *children*, but in no case with *men*. 'Thou didst hide these things from the wise and understanding, and didst reveal them unto babes' (Matt. xi. 25). There is no other relationship between God and Man except the relationship between a Father and His Child. 'Even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father' (John x. 15). Jesus does not know Himself except as a son, a child; and God is not revealed by Him save as a Father. Jesus always hears God speak of Him as '*Son*.' He, again, comes not in God's, but in the *Father's* Name.

The child is the spirit, the body, and the symbol of the Kingdom of the Father. It is all that stands before the eyes of Jesus for the fact of Fatherhood; for the fact of Life; for incarnation, or sacrifice of Life by God or man; for the highest and holiest manifestation of love; and for the purest and loftiest form of Personality. It is the recurring form of the Eternal in endless multiplicity through countless ages of the Kingdom of Life. Human thought has received nothing higher than this Object, either in idealizing its visions of deity,

or of man. Certainly Jesus knows of nothing higher or holier. *No spirit He evokes is placed above the spirit of the child*, for the spirit of the child is the true spirit of the Father clothed in flesh. In itself, it is the Kingdom of Heaven made visible, and the very gates thereof, for none can enter it without becoming a child. They must be born into it.

The child is thus Nature in microcosm, the Universe shut up in a soul, the true Shekinah, and inchoate Christianity incarnate. In the babe, all that Jesus has evolved of truth and divinity, is suggested, reflected, and revealed in embryo. It is the Eternal Father mortalized, the Word of God in the bud, as Jesus is the 'Word of God' in full development, consciousness, and vocality.

This view can be amply sustained by an appeal to Jesus' teaching at its highest and most comprehensive levels in the Sermon on the Mount. Before a man can even listen to the Beatitudes, he must empty himself of everything in his manhood which is constantly held up to honour, to fame, to pride, and to emulation, as the end of all nobility and heroism, by all the Epics, Histories, and Paeans of praise known to us. Learned opinion has doubtless opined that the precepts of this greatest Ethical Deliverance must wait on a far-distant future to be realized on the earth, and in the practice of human beings. All of them are, indeed, clearly impossible to the spirit of a *man*, which is the veritable 'spirit of the world,' but not so to the spirit of the child, the God-given spirit of Nature. For the child does move for a

brief space within that exalted sphere which Jesus knew to the end; and we are convinced that it was the babe who gave to Him the facts for His Ideal of human life, and the practicable manifestation of that unique spirit which breathes through it; and which especially rendered the 'authority' with which He spake 'These Words,' truly reasonable, perfectly intelligible, and profoundly natural (Matt. vii. 26-29). We believe that Jesus found every one of the precepts set forth in the Sermon on the Mount suggested, and more or less fully practised every day by children. He no more imagined His scheme of perfect human character than He received it by the hands of angels from heaven. The Father, in His children, stood before Him openly, and reflective of His own Holy Spirit and actions. It is not an intangible and unwonted vision He has described, and has limned before all human eyes for practical imitation. He was not referring to creatures who never had existence in the flesh when He poured out blessings upon those who are 'poor in spirit,' who 'resist not evil,' who are 'meek,' 'merciful,' and 'peacemakers.' These virtues actually had moved in human bodies before Him, and the eye that is not holden that it cannot see, may yet discern them in mortal shape and passion in the living child.

The great stumbling-block in our way of realizing this is, of course, the evident absence in the child of that strength and will-power which seem so essential to the practical embodiment of the Ethics of the Sermon on the Mount. All the

Ethics of Jesus undoubtedly call most imperatively for Will-power, for severe action in Self-restraint, and Self-sacrifice. How, we ask, can the child be the presentation of such an Ideal of perfection to Mankind? The child to all appearance seems the very impersonation of boundless indulgence, self-satisfaction, and unrestricted liberty.

We forget that the Sermon on the Mount, although principally appealing to human will and human activity, is based first of all on the deeper regions of human nature in its receptive and passive conditions. Life precedes Will and Action, and the Self-denial and Self-renunciation which Jesus demands in the process of perfecting character are much later experiences in human life than those sentient and sympathetic conditions of soul which He so heartily blesses in His Beatitudes. The passions of life precede the manifestations of Will, and the Beatitudes stand to the rest of His Sermon as childhood stands to manhood, or as religion stands to morality. For the human character, in its ascending course towards perfection, must necessarily pass through the 'sub-liminally' conscious before it reaches the conscious stage of existence. Like the Universe itself, it has its nebulous beginnings before it reaches cosmic, constellated, and organic activity.

It is clear that not an Ethic or Rule of human life is possible before the human heart has first been filled with some measure of Faith. And without refining too much as to the distinctions between faith and belief, we may easily admit that it is the boundless confidence of the child which makes his

sonship a factor of his life-experiences, and that afterwards renders it possible for the man to have will-power to deny himself, or to sacrifice himself in any way. It is also noticeable that the entire Ethic of the Sermon lies in the *human* sphere, and depends for its fulfilment on the inter-relations of man with man. But all this is impossible until there has first been an inter-relation, unconscious it may be, between the child and God, and love and faith have been rooted in its nature through the gifts of Life. Jesus opens His Sermon by blessing this condition of repose and quiescence of spirit, this calmness in the soul due to the natural though unconscious trust of the child in all that has been bestowed upon it. Human character, or what finally results from the exercise of Will, must begin here. It must grow out of this soil. And it is this deep, fathomless trust, though quite unconscious in the child, which, because it is so essential to perfected human character in its later developments, Jesus calls for in the man, and which, if men would possess, they must first of all become as 'little children.' The seeming indulgence, self-satisfactions, and unrestrained freedom beheld in the child are due to this natural, unruffled, and undimmed confidence, and it is this same 'faith' in God and in Himself which Jesus demands before all else. Indeed, the chief element in every child-character, and in every child-thing, is the inexhaustible confidence reposed in the parent. Now, it is undoubtedly this boundless confidence which Jesus reposes in the heavenly Parent which is more characteristic of Him than

even His intense desire to do the Father's Will, and to finish His work. Nay, but for this child-faith in Him, His Will must have remained unformed within Him, and the 'Work' of the Father unfinished. For Will is but Faith active. It was, indeed, the lack of faith in His disciples which Jesus held to be the hindrance to their removing 'mountains,' and healing others. His injunctions, 'Take no thought for the morrow,' 'Why are ye fearful?' 'Let not your heart be troubled,' and many more, are incomprehensible unless we first understand that He expects from all that would follow Him, not first the spirit of the strong, will-wielding, irresistible Man, but chiefly, and before all things, the passive, poor, loving, confiding spirit of the meek, and oftentimes mourning child. Eternally and in all things it is so. Life and Faith first, then, in proportion to these, the Will and the Works. The true knowledge of what man is, as of what God is, lies first in experiencing the nature of the 'little child.' And, clearly, the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount are as representative of the child's spirit as all that follows in it portrays the characteristics of the man.

For all that is implied in the power of the Will in man, such as Self-sacrifice, Self-renunciation, and Self-suppression in any form, although elementary enough in the Ethic or Morality of Jesus' system, is far from being the primary element in His religion. Morality is always a growth above the ground, for the most part, and draws its force from the religious region beneath; and the religion

of Jesus, as well as every religion worth the name, springs up out of the abyss of Life, and that fathomless realm of the unconscious and unknown which is yet more sensitive of eternity than of time.

Men doubtless speak of this twilight realm as of one shadowed over with weakness, uncertainty, hesitation, babbling simplicity, and incoherency, a region flooded with mere enthusiasms, dreams, impulses, and eccentricities. Nevertheless, these are the unrestrained ground-swells and passion-currents that course through the deeps of life, in which the Father-life and that of His child hold loving indefinable communion, and from whence issues that Faith and Will which not only overturn mountains, but overwhelm the world.

Will-power is not absent in the child. On the contrary, if it were not in the child, it could never develop in the man. We believe it to be as evident in the one as in the other. The Child-faith is indeed the fundamental force behind all movement of will in any one. But Will in the child is not constrained, and, therefore, does not manifest itself, in the same way as in man. In the child we see the Will-power wholly under the constraints and forces of life, but in man the same power is for the most part under the constraining influences of acquired morality, or those governing ideas of right and wrong which pervade his social environment. The dynamic of life in full freedom, and not that of morality, is the executor-general in every child's action. Whether the child does well to follow the one and ignore the other is, of course, a question that touches closely the origin of 'sin'

in the child. We hold that the child does well in obeying the life-instincts, and in asserting its will in the interests of these, even when the powers at work may appear to us as both unconscious and unintelligent. The impulses working in the child are undoubtedly hereditations of the freedom of the Eternal Father which He freely gives to all new-born life, and which have within them a far deeper wisdom than is ever known to the after experience of the man. It is difficult to see how the evolution and development of the race of man could have been effected without them. All moral law which subsequently regulates life must be held, as far as we at present know it, to be both of inferior value and status to these innate 'laws' or impulses of the child-being; and in the same sense all 'Law' must be regarded as inferior to Life.

The actions of the child, moreover, are luminous of faith. They show a very riotousness of confidence. No 'faith' in men ever approaches it in strength, or ever develops in them such enthusiasms, and headlong endeavour. In the child there is no *doubt*. There is no shadow of hesitation. There is the same fearless swing in the child-will and child-action as is evident in the earth's trajectory round the sun. To Jesus there seems to have been a feeling of sublimity in contemplating it. We, from the heights of manhood, patronizingly look down and say, 'the result of ignorance!' 'Childhood is a dangerous period!' But Nature says, 'It is I, be not afraid.' What we see is Life. Bold and blissful, it leans upon the bosom of the Father, and feels the joy of the sons of the

morning. It was here where Jesus saw for the first time His vision of the Father-God, and found the data for His own faith in the future perfection of Man. For it is no more than a child's faith which Jesus has in the Father, and He asks nothing greater from man, in order to save the world.

How eagerly, indeed, does Jesus seek for this Faith! How helpless He seems to feel until it is present! How highly He esteems it wherever He finds it, even when it is no greater than a grain of mustard seed. The lack of it He accounts loss of the deepest. He evinces something like a hopeless agony on certain occasions lest He may not find it on the earth in a coming day (Luke xviii. 8). How earnestly He scans the waste desert lands of Judaism if He may haply discern it springing up there even as a plant of the feeblest growth. It is with anguish that He finds it an impossible culture in the Temple soil, all annealed and enamelled as that ground was from the hot furnaces of law and ceremony, justice and judgment. How enthusiastically He hails it in the Centurion, and in the Syrophenician woman, on the more natural ground of foreign husbandry, ploughed by sorrow and harrowed by pain.

But how often soever it might be lacking in men, faith to Him was unmistakeable in the child. In the child-nature it finds its home; there, it is native and imperial. There, the precious seed comes forth from mother-ground, and luxuriates to that vigorous degree which men pityingly characterize as weediness. But even so, Jesus exults in its rank naturality, feels its pulse of vitality throbbing

in His own life, welcomes the babe to His breast, and warningly assures the world—‘Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.’

The resistance to evil, the forgiveness of the enemy and the persecutor, the turning of the other cheek, the repression of judgment, the secretiveness of alms-giving, prayer, and fasting, and that beautiful but strenuous morality which flows from doing unto others as we would that others should do unto us,—the self-sacrifice, in short, and all forms of Will-exercise and assertion,—are vainer than vanity, and fruitless, indeed, unless they grow out of that natural child-life, and child-faith, which the child-nature alone possesses. Jesus constantly assumes this child-faith as *the premier thing* in hearing His words and doing them, and so in founding the ‘house’ and finally finishing it as a fabric built upon rock (Matt. vii. 24). The perfect human character can only attain to such fixed completion when it is cradled in poverty of spirit, hunger and thirst, meekness and mournfulness, and leans upon the Father as a child hangs upon its mother’s breast, suffering in trust, bearing all things, believing all things, hoping all things, enduring all things. This accomplished, the human powers of Will can then go forth into all possible earthly and unearthly relationships, in the great power of God, in the power of the Father revealed in His child.

Was it not His own child-faith in the Father that enabled Jesus Himself to exemplify all the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount, and to give

in His whole historical life and death an embodiment of the perfect human character? Can we think that He was governed by other and diviner influences than are amply latent in humanity? Did He work with other gifts and capabilities than are bequeathed to every child-nature? Does He not rather proclaim His ideal of the perfect life with all the greater force of authority because He knew that the materials of its growth, and the capacity for its fulfilment, were given as a Father's heritage to every soul entering this world?

Jesus does not insist on impossibilities in His Sermon. But all He asks there is impossible unless the child rules the man. He simply exalts the child before the eyes of men, and asks them in their sphere to be to God and to their fellowmen as is the child in its sphere. He asks that man should maintain only the natural relation to God which is affirmed in every father's relation to his babe, and, by preserving that relation, to be perfect as the Father is perfect, who Himself does not profess to do more. *For nothing in the Sermon on the Mount transcends the natural relationship of Parent and offspring*; nay, it is for the purpose of leading up to the perfection of this relationship that the Sermon is preached. For the sum of its teaching, as well as the climax of its excellence, is reached when men become 'sons' of their Father in heaven. The natural standard is ever the highest. It is truly the divine. 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven.' 'Ye, therefore, shall be perfect, as your heavenly

Father is perfect' (Matt. v. 44, 45, 48). Nothing surpasses the perfection which is given in the relationship, heaven-made, between a father and his child; and, consequently, Jesus characterizes as 'dead,' and as 'lost,' the child who sunders his relationship with his father (Luke xv., Prodigal Son), and finds the ultimate grief in His own isolation from His Father: 'My God, my God, why didst Thou forsake Me?'

It is impossible to overrate the value of the movement of the mind which we call Faith, or Belief. In nothing has Jesus proved so clearly His profound knowledge of the constitution of man as in the front place which He has given to Faith in His religious and moral teaching. Bishop Westcott has rightly affirmed that it is 'the absolute condition of all life, of all action, of all thought which goes beyond the limitations of our own minds,' and has further declared that 'we live by faith however we live' (*Historic Faith*, I.).

That is to say, Faith is the basis of all relationship consciously conceived. 'Blind Faith' has been characterized by Huxley as the 'one unpardonable sin.' But there is perhaps in every soul a form, or kind of faith, from which all other forms of faith grow, which cannot be conceived as other than 'blind,' seeing it is of an unconscious nature, a form of faith that cannot, indeed, be distinguished from 'instinct.' This, however, cannot be called the 'Faith' of religion. It is not a form of *virtue*, but of *life*. It is a *natural motion of soul* common to every living thing.

It is surprising at first that Jesus should have

made this Faith-communion with Himself the per-essential condition of receiving the Father's life to everlasting. So simple, so feeble, so wavering and unsubstantial seems the thing we call Faith.

But what more faltering and fluttering than the seed blown to the ground? Blown upon the winds, it seems put outside of all provision. Yet it is under the care of every force in the Universe. Again, what more blind-like and helpless than the child-lip groping for the breast? Yet here is action obedient to a faith which is not conscious, but which is necessary to life, and life more abundant. Both seed and child are respectively under necessity to enter into communion with the ground and with the parent life, and each is led by operative influences which are 'blind' indeed, but blind only in the sense that blindness is also the condition of the motions in the protoplasmic cell, which, through such blindness, attains to the fullest light of life and conscious vision.

In the child's case, Faith-communion with the parent life can hardly be said in the theological sense to reach the dimensions of the mustard seed. It is regarded as instinctive, and with little of active self-directed motion at all. But it is a faith which acts and communes and moves outside of all intelligence or intellectual direction, and which is dead and deaf, so far, to all ethical supervision from external 'Laws' or 'commandments.' It is Life-faith and not religious 'faith,' and hears only the calls of the Parent-life, the Father, through the deeps of its being, and through those sympathies and passions which pervade it. Feeble, fluttering,

blind and wavering towards its object, this kind of blind soul yet comes by such faith-influences into necessary communion with the Father-God, and lives. By this simple means, the Kingdom of Life is established in God's Universe and extended throughout all Creation, and by similar means Jesus is also confident that the Kingdom of the Father can be established in the Earth so that the gates of Hades, or death, shall not prevail against it.

Jesus Himself fully vindicated this kind of child-faith to be His own, and trusted His kingdom on earth to the same feeble powers that control the fate of the seed, and the life of the child. There is nothing more marvellous than the faith He displayed in casting His teaching, as it were, upon the wind. He is not careful to preserve by writing the great truths He spoke. He ventures His all into the hands of poor, ignorant, uninfluential men. The only human condition He seeks for His words is Faith. Simply, that they should believe His word. It seems like suspending eternity by a hair. It was certainly a feeble cord, even though a golden one, on which to hang the fate of this world. Yet it was done, and the historical record of the past ages abundantly testifies to the wisdom and truth of His choice. Faith in Jesus is still the cord by which the world hangs, and on which all its salvation depends, not because the power lies in the act of the human soul, but in the communion which it commands with the fathomless life of the Father-God.

In an age when it is regarded as 'strong' to

know and 'weak' to *believe*, it is of the utmost importance that the reverse should be shown to be more in harmony with absolute truth, and that Jesus made no mistakes in placing Faith in His system as the first condition for human well-being. For it is evident that this 'Faith' which Jesus craved from man was not a mere stamp of discipleship, or a mode of initiation into certain mysteries of His kingdom, or a kind of condition of worship. It must be regarded as a law or intuition of existence. *It is inherent in all life, and we can have no knowledge without it.* The experiments and observations of the laboratories of science are platformed upon it as necessarily as the creeds of the halls of theology. How otherwise would experiments and demonstrations be undertaken, or creed-horizons be cut out of the mystery that environs all religious feeling? For the Unknown is as real and as bottomless in Creation as it is in the human soul. Man with all he knows is but a little further on than the child in his apprehension of the Unconscious and the Indefinable, and constantly finds himself compelled to rest what he believes he knows, on that faith or trust in all without and within himself of which he knows almost nothing.

Man, as Shelley tells us, looks before and after. But he does so by faith. He trusts in the constancy of the order of the Universe. The past is founded on faith of what has been told us, and the future cannot be conceived except on a basis of belief. The present seems secure in a knowledge which rests not in faith but in actual experience. But

this also is delusive. For we never have experience of causes, but only of effects. We must have faith in causes. When we experience an effect, its cause is not in our present but already in a past which demands our faith in order to realize it to intelligence. When we receive a blow, for example, we feel pain, but though the pain is in our present experience, the cause of it is as distinctly in the past as is the lightning-cause which a few seconds later is an experience of blinding light through the eye. We can only *believe* in the cause of the pain, as we can only *believe* in the cause of the lightning flash. Both causes are in the past, and divided from our present, though it may be by a single second, and the *effects* of them simply are an experience to us. Causes are in their origins all unknowns, and can only be apprehended by faith. And this faith in causes is as essential to an apprehension of our present as of our past; of one kind of knowledge as of any other kind.

We speak, indeed, in a loose way of 'travelling back into the past,' or of projecting ourselves into the future, in much the same way that we speak of the sun 'rising' or of the moon 'going down.' But we can have no *knowledge* of either past or future, except through the impressions which have been left on our minds by the causes which have passed over them. We do not bring back the past by recollecting our impressions of it. We only reproduce to consciousness those few impressions of the past which are laid up in our subter-consciousness, and look upon them in a manner

similar to gazing upon past faces by producing their photographs. The past is never more an experience to us, except through the impressions of it which are stored up in the, so to speak, sensitized films of the mind.

It is a common delusion that we are recalling yesterday, for example, when we are viewing in our minds the impressions which it has left there. But memory neither carries us into yesterday, nor yet does it bring it back to us. Memory is simply the power of reproducing out of the region of our sub-consciousness (the 'sub-liminal consciousness')—that dark part of our moonlike personality—the impressions left in it. There is never an experience except an experience of what the present gives to us. All that lies in the past is a matter of faith. If we, for instance, read a history of Greece, of Rome, or of any country which has a history, the impressions from the words and thoughts of the book are left in the mind, where space, and actions, and the human and other actors in the history are all re-created anew by the mind for itself out of the material which the book has supplied, and are retained there. When we call memory afterwards into action regarding Greece, or Rome, or the particular nation whose history we have read, it is not the actual Greece, or Rome, which we recall, but the impressions of the book which we have read concerning them. And it is the same with every thing which the past has taken away. What we know of it is based upon our faith in what has been told us, or impressed upon our minds by our past experiences.

But our knowledge of the *present* is also based on a faith. Take, for example, our knowledge of our dearest relationships. Take the Home. It is the basis of all society, yet it is built on faith. This most sacred of all human institutions rests first on a life-relationship. But this relationship is never a certainty to any member of it except as certified by faith. No one really *knows* his father or his mother. He only *knows* a man or a woman, and *believes* them to be his parents. There is actually no other way of founding the Home. It stands on faith. The home, however, securely enough reposes on the rock of life, and on that life communicated, and finally on a faith-communion with that communicated life as being one's own life.

All the departments of the great fabric of human society likewise rest upon this faith that man has in man; domestically, commercially, politically, or nationally.

The future is in a like category. We do not project ourselves into the future under any conditions, any more than we can pass back into the true past. But hope and fear can make mental space for themselves, and fill consciousness with all kinds of unrealities, and walk endlessly through dreams. We have only present experience of effects of past causes, and are connected with these causes by faith.

Next to Life itself, therefore, Jesus, in seeking for faith in man, was seeking for what is in reality most vital to man, and all that pertains to his being and well-being. His own faith in the Father-God had all the strength that sight usually brings

to the human mind. It was the faith which is so characteristic of the child. And where the philosopher seeks to grasp the Universal, or Infinite, by Reason, the poet by imagination, the scientist by observation and experiment, Jesus chose the way of Faith, the way of the intuitions, the instincts, the *life-pulses*.

Now, reason is not more characteristic of the philosopher, imagination of the poet, and enquiring curiosity of the scientist, than faith is of the child. It 'believes all things.' It has no gift of prophecy, it knows not mysteries nor all knowledge, but it loves, and has faith. The babe resists not evil, but suffers long and is kind, is not puffed up, envies not, does not vaunt itself, seeks not its own, for the child conceives the parent alone to have possessions. If Jesus be not this Babe, who then is He? How could He have had faith in the Father, unless He Himself had first believed that He was a child?

The process of the ages doubtless culminates in Jesus, but from of old, and from eternity, the first and only relationship known to the Eternal One was that between Father and Child. Nothing He has made falls lower than this level in His regard. It was the primal form in which He clothed His divinity, it was the earliest voice in His ear, it was the beginning of the Creation of God. The child may not always have been of human shape, nay, it must often have been of far other shape, but our faith must now lay hold on the fact that the thing which the Father-God has carried for so many lapsed eternities in His bosom was, in some form

or other, this child-being whom we now clothe with our love and our life and rock in our cradles. *It is still the first form in the Kingdom of Matter, as its spirit is first in the Kingdom of God.* The path of the Eternal is veritably one that goeth forth from everlasting to everlasting, trending onwards in its sublimity through vastitudes of space, of ether, of air, through the realms of the gaseous, the fluid, and the solid. But His inflexible purpose is undivided and forever one; forever to realize Himself in His Fatherhood, in the varied child-thing which He endows with His own Father-life—an ever-increasing and endlessly ascending life—as we are permitted to contemplate it from below—calculable and sensible through all motion in electron, atom, ‘radiobe,’ germ, plant, animal, and man; and again, in man, pulsing through his conscious force-forms of spirit, soul, and thought, and shadowing itself over, and colouring all human existence as life, material, righteous, or good. And the glorious ascension through all is crowned in the realization of the ‘greatest,’ the child, the Son, in whom at last, in the fulness of the ages of longsuffering, the Father has well-pleasing;—in beholding His Son of Man, the Heir of Eternity, the Child of the Father-God. For when Jesus saw the reasoning of their heart, He took a little child, and set him by His side, and said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this little child in My name receiveth Me, and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me. For he that is least among you all, the same is great (Luke ix. 46-48).

CHAPTER V

THE PERFECT HUMAN CHARACTER

THE Faith of Jesus in the origin of human life as being found in a Father alone, and not in a mere Creator, and in Fatherhood as being the grand fountain-source of the All we view as 'Nature,' the most absolute form of life we know, leads us naturally, in following Him, to a revised and more rational conception of what Creation actually is, and to one, perhaps, more in agreement with the elemental and evolutionary processes of creation which 'Nature' herself discloses to scientific enquiry. The philosophers and most of our modern poets have placed 'Nature' almost, but not altogether, on the same plane of being as Man. The theologians, on the other hand, have calmly assumed that a gulf of chasmal immeasurability lies between them. The poets are perhaps nearer the truth. The teaching of Jesus suggests that no such chasm exists save in human thought. In the Totality of Being, unity and identity reigns over the Universe. The child is not in antithesis to the rest of the All we call 'Nature,' but is 'Nature' come to full flower in being. They are

One in the Life of the Father-God out of which both ascend. The conception which would include the truth of both should widen to that unity which reveals in both the same Life, and the same Life and Love of their One Father.

Being, however, may be a unity, while its development is various. Being, also, in itself is a *faith* to us, while the character of Being is *known* by its fruits. 'Nature' may be one in source with Man, though branching apart from him in character. Nevertheless, the Way of Jesus seems to compel us to find in that standard of the perfect which is followed by 'Nature,' precisely the true standard for the perfect human character. That is to say, in contemplating both, the character of 'Nature' as well as the character of Man should show us that general correspondence and consonance in proceeding towards an ideal perfection which shall attest their common conformity to the Nature and Character of Him who has begotten both. The unity of the perfection of being in 'Nature' and in Man should close in that character of perfection in the Common Father which Jesus has revealed. The fundamental Type of character in Nature, Man, and God should be One.

Hitherto this unity has been unattainable. 'Nature' was conceived as a product intentionally separated by the Creator in His creative act, as well as in time and circumstances, from His creature Man. The Being of the Creator was, likewise, considered insufficient by itself to bring forth either. He needed dust for the one and the void for the other. Both stood divided from His

own Personality. This division yet remains in all the Creeds. The Infinite One was seen in the far past as working upon a formless mass, a vast Vacuity of chaotic darkness; and as dramatically addressing a matterless Void in order to evoke from a lifeless 'Nothing' all living as well as all lifeless things. 'By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He spake and it was done: He commanded and it stood fast' (Psalm xxxiii. 6-9).

With the Master's teaching and the researches of science before us, it is now possible to see that the chaos and darkness and death, attributed to primal existence, had being only in the human imagination. The mind of Jesus is as clean of such a vision as Nature is of any such testimony. Order, and life, and law, are facts which have always and eternally existed, potential or actual, in the being of the Father. The 'chaos' of Creation is as truly present with us to-day, in all organic and inorganic things, as it has ever been at any period of the past eternities. The 'chaos' may be in human thought, and in human belief, but it is not in the facts of Nature, nor in the system of Jesus.

What it is necessary for us now to do is to stand with Him beside the child, as Moses is believed to have stood beside the flaming shrub, and humbly try to learn from Him what 'this great sight' means. Verily, compared to the child, the 'burning bush' has little to teach us, either in its vision of the true God or in its guiding laws for man,

and, as a representative symbol for a Christian Church, it is far removed surely from the truth of things.

We need to put this theory of 'Creation out of Nothing' and the un-Fathered Universe of all things which it implies, forever out of our thoughts as a falsity. The life and personality of the Father is as truly in Nature as in the child. If no man can come to the Father except through the Child (John xiv. 6), so neither can any one come to the Child except through 'Nature.' Jesus knows no other way. 'No one knoweth the Son save the Father, neither doth any know the Father save the Son'; and knowledge of Nature must be through knowledge of the son, the child. The path is one. From 'Nature up to Nature's God' would be an impossible course if the child were not first a mediatory basis for the knowledge of both. Otherwise, the God revealed to us would not be the Father-God of Jesus, but an Ogre. For our true knowledge of both 'Nature' and that 'Father' whom Jesus declared can only come through the child, either as concerns a conception of their being or their character. Man cannot see anything except through himself.

The *character*, therefore, which is potential, or lies latent in any child by virtue of the Father's life in it, will be the character which that child will attribute to its God ultimately, subject to its particular endowments of consciousness, thought, and external environment. All history attests that the consciousness of God, in His being and Character, has advanced in the consciousness of

man, as man's own consciousness of himself has developed. 'It is plain,' says Illingworth (*Personality, Human and Divine*, Lect. I.), 'that the personality attributed to God can at no period have been more distinctly conceived than was its human analogue; and we shall not be surprised to find the former conception modified as the latter has grown more clear. In a word, since man himself has been progressive, his notion of God must have been progressive also.'

The *character of man*, therefore, rises primarily out of the Father-life, and is progressively shaped to an ideal, under the forces of faith and thought acting through will, which must necessarily tend towards an ideal of a perfect Father as man himself becomes conscious of his relation to that Father *as His child*. Unity of character must finally rest upon unity of nature and being, which, in the terminology of Jesus, means unity of Life. The relation to the Infinite through self-consciousness which philosophy unfolds, and the relation to God which Christian Dogma commands through Faith, are only progressive stages towards realizing the yet deeper relationship to the Father-God through life, or by the knowledge of being His child. Human character, consequently, will be true and 'sinless,' when, and for as long as a man is true to the first fact of his being, viz. the life of the Father laid down in himself as His child. This fact of life is the truest, and the most irreducible thing of which man is conscious. It is through this truth of his life that he is conscious of any truth, and the perfect ideal of human character

must always begin with it, even as it ends in the life of the Father-God. According to Jesus, God is the Father of men by His own act, and is so apart from either their faith or their consciousness. And it is in order that they may be 'sons' in *character* as well as 'sons' by *life*, or, to harmonize character with life, that He asks them to do as their Father does (Matt. v. 45). In short, the character realized by faith and thought, in acting through will, can for man be no other than that Father-character which already lies latent and potential in the natural God-Father-life which is possessed by every child.

We have ventured the statement (p. 57) that 'Fatherhood is the fountainhead of death, and that love in sacrifice called it forth.' The child-life is again the proof of this truth. For if the greatest Ethic of Jesus is 'Die to live,' as Hegel, Pfleiderer, the Master of Balliol, and others, have asserted, then it must involve a principle which includes God also in its operations. Manifestly, before man can 'die,' he must have life. But he can only get life from the alone Source of all life. The Source of this life must then through sacrifice surrender His life to man. But this is to become a Father to a child. And because God has so given His life to man, Jesus asks all who have received it to surrender it by sacrifice in like manner. Be like the Father in laying down life. All other minor forms of sacrifice are bound up in this one, and subordinate to it. *The character of God*, as it is known to the human mind, takes rise out of His first act in 'dying' in order that,

like the seed, He might not 'abide alone.' All true character, indeed, rests on sacrifice; and the highest character on the sacrifice of the highest things. He gave up His life that He might take it again in the child, the man, the Universe; and as *His character of Father* begins with this act, it also becomes the only perfect ideal of human character for His child, and for all that have life from Him. All must 'follow' Him, for to *be* like Him we must *do* like Him. There is no higher Ideal to follow.

This constitutes perhaps the cardinal reason why 'death' is an experience to all. The Eternal so made and so Himself first walked the path; and to be perfect as He is, all must walk therein. Life eternal is the consequence; life being an unceasing gift from the Father-Fount that knows no exhaustion.

Jesus Himself bases the development of His own perfect character on this example of the Father. He lays down His life, not merely on the Cross (which is really the end of His surrender of mortal life), but during all the years of His life. And He never asks man to do anything which God Himself has not done. On the contrary, it is in the Example of the Father-God that He bases for Himself this highest 'Law' of human Duty. 'Die to Live' is not the basis of the religion and Ethics of Jesus, unless we understand it to include in its scope a 'dying' in God before there can be a 'dying' in man. It is the highest and the divinest 'death' known. But all forms of death are subsumed under this concept. The child is here in

this world, because God has surrendered His life in him, or 'died' to Himself. The beginning of all relationship, and, therefore, of Religion, is thus possible. The child, the everything that has life, is the product of God's surrender of life; and all religion and all morality spring up out of this Life-relatedness henceforward and forever. Out of this Gift of Life Jesus not only builds His realization of God as His and our Father, but upon it He also founds the 'Law' of highest morality for the guidance of man towards the Perfected Life.

If we seem to insist too much on this primal sacrificial act of God in 'laying down His life,' it is because we believe it to be the grand standard of perfection to which all character is ultimately to be referred. Jesus refers His own act of 'laying down His life' to it, and says that He received this commandment from the Father, and that the Father loved Him because He laid down His life (John x. 17-18). He assumes to do nothing save what the Father has already done. And it is, moreover, to be perfect as the Father is perfect, and not as He Himself is perfect, that He makes the highest standard for man. The standard must, consequently, be a real one, and one such as not only Jesus but all men can follow. It must also be a living standard through all time, and as much a practice with God to-day as it has ever been in the past.

We venture now to include what we understand as 'Nature' in the term 'Child.' Man is but one of the many children of God 'our Father.' There is, indeed, a pre-supposition, of increasing strength

in these days, that Nature is but a mediatorial paternity of His own universal Fatherhood. We begin to look upon Nature as the phenomenon of the Fatherhood of God, in progress, or, let us say, in pregnancy, through countless centuries, towards that surrender of His life which we behold visibly evolved now in the human being. And, regarding His Fatherhood in its ultimate and widest activity, we may reasonably conceive that every particle in the great Universe, as well as everything we call 'alive' upon the earth, is in motion towards this Child-resultant in Man, under the all-impelling purpose of the same Father-God. We might venture further to suggest that the same stupendous purpose is also carrying forward on its broad bosom every, even the meanest of men, now, or to be yet upon the earth, towards that character of perfected Childhood or Sonship which was realized in Jesus. We do not understand, otherwise, the meaning of the prayer, 'That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me.' If Man is Nature come to self-consciousness, then Jesus is surely the unity of both, and the fulness of the Fatherhood of God as it is revealed under both these forms of embodiment and incarnation.

There is no reason to doubt Professor Cheyne when he says (*Encyc. Bib.*, 'Prayer,' § 7) that one of the fundamental elements in the inner life of Jesus was 'the belief that God is a loving Father whose one great object in His dealings with men is the production of a perfect human character.' This purpose seems amply upheld by all we know of the fathomless desires of the human soul; by

all that Nature testifies in that resistless upward evolutionary trend which culminates in man; by all that History proves in an advancing and widening civilization; and by all that universal religion reveals of an age-long dawning of increasing light upon eternal things.

But the term 'Man' constantly blinds us to the *form* of this ultimate purpose of God, and it has been steadily assumed that the 'perfect human character' must necessarily result in a perfect *Man*. This was the Apostolical Ideal. 'Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, *unto a full-grown Man*, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; *that we may be no longer children*' (Eph. iv. 13). The Apostolic Writings press men with urgency to 'Put off the old Man,' and to put on the 'New Man,' as the true method of attaining 'perfect human character.' They scorn the Child, and when they become Men they put away 'childish things' (1 Cor. xiii. 11).

Now the teaching of Jesus as strenuously strives to reduce and, if possible, to annihilate this assumption of a perfect *man*. The Child is His Ideal of perfection. All the moulding forces which flow from His teaching, example, and declared spirit, make for the production of the perfect Child rather than the perfect Man. We are all to grow up into a perfect childhood rather than into a manhood perfected. The Child, we must repeat, is Jesus' grand pattern and standard, but never the Man. For, indeed, there is no correlation of the Man in God, but only in the child. A perfect 'manhood'

is clearly a conventional term, created by the exigencies of society, and does not rest on any substantive relationship. Before God and His Son manhood is a silence, and does not exist in the system of Jesus. It is simply one of the many fictitious relationships which men agree to acknowledge, and it has its uses, but unlike the relationship of the child, it has no eternal validity, and vanishes in the Eternal Presence. Jesus never assumes that anyone can be a *man* before God, but only a *child*. Consequently, all His teaching urges towards reaching and maintaining the relationship of the child in our characters, on a level with the child-relationship given us by God in our being. We are to strive to be 'the least,' the most like the 'little child'; the most like Jesus Himself, in short; and, consequently, as far as possible from what the world standardizes in 'manhood.' The one relationship is built on rock, the other on sand.

Jesus thus proved also that the perfect human life founds upon perfect relationship rather than on a limitless duration of human being. He abolished the idea that immortality, or an endless extension of being in the Hereafter, was necessary, as Kant supposed, to realize moral and spiritual perfection. Kant, for example, reasoned that the perfect moral ideal was impossible and unattainable within the period of human life. He, therefore, inferred that immortality was essential to the realization of man's instincts for perfection.

Jesus completely denies the postulate that man cannot reach perfection of the moral and spiritual ideal in this life. He also takes this ideal out of

the air and places it in the loftiest Person, viz. the Father Himself. 'Ye, therefore, shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect' (Matt. v. 48). And this goal of perfection is reached when men become 'SONS' of the Father in *character* as in their *being*; by their own act as by His; or when they fulfil through their own will, as He has already through His, true child-relationship with the Father (Matt. v. 45). To be the child, as Jesus was, is to exhaust the moral ideal of perfection in any man. Perfection is thus also rendered independent of the Hereafter, and God's will done on the earth as it is in heaven is made natural and possible. The life and character of man become then 'one' with the life and character of the Father through the category of such child-relationship; and this relationship, as in the concrete case of Jesus, may remain unsullied and unbroken forever. To preserve the true child-relationship with the Father, or to renew it when severed, is to achieve the loftiest moral harmony with the highest Moral Excellence which is possible to any being. Jesus Himself sought nothing higher than this child-relationship, or 'sonship,' and He never doubts that all men may reach the same perfection. His prayer is that all may be 'one' as *He is one with the Father* (John xvii. 21), and His very word 'Father' in this prayer implies that it is solely through being a true Child that He realizes this Unity.

Now, this type of perfect human character was, it is believed, realized for the first time by Jesus Himself. At least, the highest minds of the race, as well as the consensus of the most civilized

opinion, have exalted His human character to the loftiest eminence of judgment, as being the purest and grandest Ideal of perfection for all humankind. But it is certain, as we have briefly stated already, that He never assumed to have created the Type. He claims, indeed, to initiate nothing. 'The Son can do nothing of Himself.' 'I can of Myself do nothing' (John v. 19-30). As a prior fact, *the type of perfect life seen in Jesus existed always in the Father*, and Jesus simply makes it His meat and His drink to be *like*, or to follow the Father. In harmony with all He teaches men to strive for, He first sets the example of doing the will of the Father, pleasing Him in all things, and becoming in this way perfect as His heavenly Father is perfect. *He sets up the Father before Him as His standard of perfection*, and then proceeds to make it His own in the flesh, and to inculcate the same pattern on all men henceforward. 'My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me.' 'I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me.' 'The Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth.' Contrary to the general opinion, Jesus does not live, and makes no profession to live, an *originally* perfect life. His own human character is a translation of the Father's into mortal life, and He acknowledges it to be so. And the translation of the original Father-perfection is naturally revealed as Child-perfection, for it is through the natural veracities of the child-life that Jesus unfailingly interprets for Himself the pattern which is given Him in the Father.

And it is this *natural* method towards perfection which Jesus followed that really stamps Him as the superior of all other 'divine' guides or leaders of men towards a realization in man of the perfect human character. It is a matter of common knowledge that when He entered the world He found at least three other methods dominating all human life. The best, the wisest, and the most ingenious minds of all past time had evolved and developed the Hebrew Ideal of divine-apartness, culminating in the High Priest-Prophet; the Greek Ideal of intellectual nobility, crowned in the Poet-Philosopher; and the Roman Ideal of just power, materializing at its highest point in the Law-giving Emperor. These ideals must have come before Jesus, as patterns of human life, and often likewise in their most aggressive forms. It is just possible that they are the material out of which the Temptation narratives are built. Human life is there asked to find end in the perfection of satisfied hungers in all that is meant by the Temple, or in all that is summed up in ruling the kingdoms of this world. And if these standards of human perfection are really at the core of the stories of His Temptation in the Wilderness, then Jesus found them woefully lacking, and actually under the dominion of a grand Deceiver.

But it is only bare historical fact that these Ideals of perfection maintained by Hebrew, Greek, and Roman held the world in thrall at the coming of Jesus. How did He displace them? By what force did He rend them out of the enthusiasms and pursuits of mankind, and enthrone His own

in their place? Was it by the display of resistless power in miracle and sign? in quenching hunger and thirst by bread and wine? or by that amazing intellectual vigour which enfolded the destinies of the world in its comprehensive embrace, and enabled Him to generalize the profoundest principles from the most trifling data? Or was it by His native dignity of mien, the authority of His teaching, or His indifference to comfort, culture, and wealth? Or was it by His immovable serenity and absolute self-possession when fronting the combined might and misery of Man and Death? Or was it, once more, by the superb assumption on His part of Kingship while He was yet a pilgrim and a beggar, and His transcendent audacity in exalting Himself to the right hand of the Supreme Being as final Judge and Divider of the universal race of Man?

These traits of character might, indeed, have astonished and awed the world, and have compelled its homage and submission. But He employed none of His unique gifts to compel men to obey Him. He was rather ambitious to draw all men unto Himself by far other means. The grand power by which Jesus sought to subdue the world, and by which it must ultimately be bowed, lay, and lies yet, in that universal imperative which is wielded by every child that is born into the earth. It is the power of Love and Faith. These are the supreme solvents by which every iron and rocky obstruction is melted down. These alone can conquer the human heart, and it is because the world beholds Jesus robed in these divine aspects

of the true child that it has fallen at His feet and rendered Him the fullest obedience and the purest worship. From His child-love and faith in His Father have radiated that simplicity of life and word, that modest yet magnificent claim to possess the entire human soul for Himself and His Father, that unruffled contentment with the humblest and the worst in men and circumstances, and that meek consent to the most ghastly form of death, which have bent the hardest hearts, and changed the fashion of the inner spirit of men.

Now Jesus values the human soul exactly by the same standard of Father-life as He does His own personality. But His unique and pre-eminent accomplishment on the plane of history has been to sustain this child-relationship, this first gift of the Father, in its flawless integrity and fullest expansion, where all others have aimed at the 'Man' and have fallen short. His sinlessness undoubtedly consists in maintaining intact that child-relationship with the Father-God, which God Himself alone created; and His having done this, and revealed the possibility of all men to do the same, must be judged as His greatest contribution to the salvation of the race. For it implies, as we must reiterate, the possibility and practicability of all men becoming 'perfect as the Father is perfect,' and this means the realization in every man not only of the child which by life he is, but of the child by character that Jesus was, and is now.

The theological conventionality that 'spiritual' life is something quite different from 'natural' life has perhaps prevented us from seeing the

identity of relationship which runs up through every phase of our personality; physical, mental, or psychical; from the lowliest birth on the earth to the highest summit of eternal Fatherhood. Drummond, for example, says: 'He who lives the spiritual Life has a distinct kind of Life added to all the other phases of Life which he manifests' (*Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, p. 81). The earth-born birth has been likewise held as 'sinful' birth, and to have no connection with that new-birth which belief in Jesus effects in a man. The birth of 'flesh' has been held to be entirely different from the birth of 'spirit.' The birth is so, indeed, but the life which brings birth about is the same life in both cases. The Father-life is only working through 'flesh' in the one case and through 'spirit' in the other. The life is one. Only the material in which it works is various. It produces kinds of fruit. It yields diverse characters. But it is fundamentally one. As Westcott remarks: 'There was a time when it was usual to draw a sharp line between religious and worldly things. That time has happily gone by.'

Jesus, consequently, set up His Ideal of 'perfect human character' with boundless faith in the earth-born living child. He thereby obtained the fullest fruit of both 'religion' and 'morality' from the deep root of Father-Life, and likewise superseded the shallower bases of Thought and Volition on which all artificial religions and systems of morality had stood previous to His Advent. For, to be 'born anew,' 'from above,' or 'again,' does not mean that man is to have a new kind of Father-life

expressed into his personality which he has never known before. It simply means that belief in Jesus, or 'following' Jesus, is to return from the Man to the Child-relationship which the Father can alone accept or recognise; and so to enter into that genuine relationship which must be eternal. The man must negate the man, and all that that assumption means, and humble himself to be the little child, in returning to truth and perfect accord with the Nature and Character of the Father. This is the perfection of Jesus. Let any one who has been 'converted' analyse his experience, and he will find that it is all summed up in his becoming before God and man, once more, a 'little child.'

The increasing judgment of a world slowly rising into higher illumination has accepted this Ideal of Jesus. The Ideals of the Hebrew, the Greek, and the Roman more and more verge towards decay. They were certain to come to death-grips with that of Jesus and to be overthrown. For the Greek and Roman Ideals of the perfect human character failed in essentials in that they hesitated to enter the sphere of the Divine, and bind human endeavour to the will of the Unseen Being. No Greek or Roman felt it absolutely compulsory to follow the dictates of the Deities he worshipped. The Greek held by his reason as a sufficient test of human conduct, and the Roman consulted his sword as often and with more faith than he consulted his Oracles. Consequently, these being counted out, the Hebrew Ideal became the grand protagonist of the Ideal of perfect human character

set up in Jesus. For the Hebrew did profess to have Eternal authority behind all he did and said, or 'commanded.' Reward or punishment also descended from his God upon man in exact measure of his obedience or disobedience. The Home, the Temple, the Race, were under the power and supervision of this Deity. All human action had, therefore, Divine consequences.

This Ideal could hardly be deposed in a day. That it yet has power over all civilized nations is attested by every experience of public and domestic life. The Ideal of Jesus has not yet obtained a triumphant ascendancy even in Christendom. Very far from it. Christendom is, for the most part, Hebrew in its conception of God, and in its idea of the 'fear of God' as the pivot-principle for correct character. The Church is yet, in reality, three-parts synagogue; and her Faith is, under the influence of the Apostles, Fathers, and Reformers, almost wholly modelled on the Old Testament order of Thought and Worship.

This may be tested by taking the highest ideal of human character which the Old Testament holds up to the world and contrasting it with that ideal which Jesus sought to put in its place.

The Hebrew ideal, as of the modern world, of the perfect human character, is admittedly summed up in the one word 'Righteousness.' To be 'righteous' is the deepest desire in the Hebrew bosom. The Hebrew Priest, doubtless, said 'Holiness,' but we must regard the prophet's word 'Righteousness' as the higher one, and as the one with which Jesus felt His contention to be the

more serious. All the great souls of the Hebrew race call upon man to become 'righteous' as the apex of human perfection. From the beginning to the end of their religious record this one word 'Righteousness' bounds, for the Hebrews, earth and sea and sky. It is their conception of perfect life for the simple reason that it is their highest conception of the Nature and Character of their God Yahwé. On the lower plane of the Priesthood, Yahwé is no doubt the 'Holy' one, but we must judge their ideals at their highest and best as these are seen in the Prophets and Psalms generally.

To be 'righteous' was to walk with God as Enoch did. Noah's noblest fame rested on his having been a preacher of 'righteousness.' Abraham soars beyond all excellence when his belief is 'counted to him for righteousness.' Yahwé is made to declare that for this end alone are men permitted to live in His earth. He asks Noah, therefore, to come into the ark with all his house, because only Noah was seen to be 'righteous' in his generation (Gen. vii. 1). The rest of the human race, having become unrighteous, is doomed to destruction by the Flood. It is 'righteousness' that recommends Abraham and his family to the special favour of Yahwé, and clearly it is the lack of one 'righteous' man in the cities of the plain that drags upon them a fiery annihilation. 'Righteousness' was keeping 'the Way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment' (Gen. xviii. 19), and because this was the distinguishing feature of Abraham's character, Yahwé

promises to make him and his 'a great and mighty nation.'

It is the same word that dominates the Psalms, the Prophets, and, with 'Holiness' qualifications, the Law. This was the supreme standard of Divine and Human perfection. 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,' was the sublime request latent in the heart of all true Hebrews, and we are not, therefore, surprised that, when the Old Testament closes, Malachi can see nothing greater arising upon the earth than a 'Sun of Righteousness.'

Even if we assume that these 'righteous' references belong to the post-exilic period (see *Hexateuch*, Carpenter-Battersby, Vol. I.: Longmans, 1900), they yet prove that the conception of 'righteousness' was the ripest fruit of the Hebrew Ideal, and that they preferred their ancient great ones to be clothed in that character.

It is this vision in the Hebrew soul that makes it vibrate so fiercely with the love and praise of 'Law.' For by the path of law, 'the way of the Lord,' the way of 'Justice and Judgment,' did he pant after Yahwé, as the heart pants, in order that he might be 'righteous.'

Compared with the ideals of the Greek and the Roman, this ideal of the Hebrew rises as far above them as the tower rises above the town. But in comparison with the ideal of Jesus that of the Hebrew is as the earth beneath the heavens. He bases upon Life and not upon Law. He sets before Man the personal character of the perfect living Father instead of the milestone directions of an

impersonal thing called Moral Law. The Hebrew really reposed upon an abstraction; *for his Ideal had never been lived*, or concreted in human personality. But Jesus founds on a *perfect life lived in the Father* in heaven and in the *Son* upon the earth. Therefore, He could say, 'Follow Me,' as the true and only 'Way' to attain the perfect human character.

The fatal defect in the Hebrew Ideal is, of course, their conception of God. It was essentially defective, and before Jesus could create a new ideal of perfect character, He had first to prove that His Ideal existed as a living fact in the Nature and character of the Most High. He really gave to the world 'a new God,' or rather, a new conception of the Eternal Being. Principal Fairbairn rightly calls this conception 'a new God,' for the Eternal Being is only intelligible to the human mind by what is known of His Nature and Character; and the nature and character of the Father of Jesus is as distinct from and as wide of the character of Yahwé as that of Yahwé is distinct from the character of Zeus, or that of Jupiter. Moreover, whatever is new in any religion rests upon whatever is new in the Nature and Character of the God whom it makes its Centre of worship. Jesus transcended the Hebrew conception of God, and thereby changed the Ideal of human life which men could look upon as Godlike or perfect.

His ideal then of the 'perfect human character' naturally follows His conception of the Father-God. He seems to say: 'Live up to the pattern of the Father's nature. Let His Name, that is, His

nature and character, be your Moral Law. Be "Good," and not simply "righteous." Be like the Father. Yea, be a Father to men, and not merely a law.'

To be 'Good' is as characteristic of the ideal of Jesus as to be 'righteous' is of the ideal of the Old Testament. In His system 'None is Good save One, God' (Mark x. 18). All moral excellence begins here. He Himself aims to be Good. 'Holiness' and 'righteousness' are words seldom uttered by Jesus. 'Good' is His favourite word. 'I am the Good Shepherd.' He sows Good seed, for it is the Good word of God. 'Good soil' is the ground it requires. The tree must not merely be righteous, it must be Good, and bring forth Good fruit. It is only the Good and faithful servant who enters into the joy of his Lord. Everywhere and on all occasions Jesus emphasizes 'Goodness,' the goodness of the Father-God, as His ideal of perfect human character. Even when He calls the Father 'righteous' (John xvii. 25) the meaning is clearly 'Good,' for by the nature of things the Father could not be 'righteous' by obedience to anyone, and 'righteousness' is only possible by obedience to law. To understand the word otherwise is to make righteousness and goodness identical. Jesus commends Mary in that she chose the Good part, though Martha's service was manifestly in the way of 'righteousness' and moral duty. He praises the salt that is Good, the Good wine, the Good man with heart full of Good treasures, the honest and Good heart, the Good work wrought upon Him for his burial. His

higher counsel to His disciples is to do Good to them that hate them.

The distinction, indeed, between the standards of Righteousness and Goodness is deep and wide. He who studied the matter with the keenest discriminating faculty has said, 'For scarcely for a *righteous man* will one die, for peradventure for the *good man* some one would even dare to die' (Rom. v. 7). To be righteous is much, it attains perfection for one's self, at least; but to be Good is to be like God. The highest testimony to the highest known human character is surely given in the words, 'Who went about doing Good' (Acts x. 38).

Moreover, the Hebrew ideal necessarily makes *Self-benefit* its Goal. 'Let *Me* die the death of the righteous.' To do the Will of Yahwé was the means by which this desire was accomplished. No man could do the obedience of the other man, but righteousness could only be attained by obedience, and hence Self-advancement and Self-perfection was the only possible ideal under such a system. All the will of Yahwé might be obeyed, indeed, without any thought being given to the brother. Priest and Levite might pass by on the other side with a clear conscience, for to love the 'neighbour' meant no more than to love one of their own nationality. It was righteous to do so. It was the grand way of their God. Had not their God Yahwé Himself set the example to them in discarding all other peoples save themselves? Why should every human soul have a claim upon every other human soul? God Himself had not chosen

to be God to any people save to the seed of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Here and there a burning prophet-soul would rend this exclusive creed, but he was always a voice crying in the wilderness. The Hebrew race followed the way of Yahwé, the Way of 'Justice and Judgment,' the way of exclusiveness and arbitrary selection: which at the root means the Way of Sanctified Selfishness. How seldom even in the Psalms, where the natural human sympathies agonize under the priestly restraints, is the Other one thought about? It is nearly always that one's self be delivered, that one's self be the object of Yahwé's blessing and salvation.

But Goodness, on the contrary, is found alone in exterminating the Self on behalf of the Other one. Let one's self perish if so be that thereby the Other one may be saved and blessed—this is the ideal of Jesus with regard to human conduct which would approach perfection. Justice and Judgment are eliminated from human motives. Only Love must rule the soul.

This is the ideal of Jesus. To show forth not merely a *righteous* life, upright, faultless, clean, blameless, irreproachable, but a *Good* life. *To live for the other one, to lay down life for the brother, and so to be, in this sacrifice of Self, like the Father.* Not with a view to one's own salvation, or of gaining reward, or to fulfil a list of 'Laws,' and so reach 'Holiness,' for one's own self, but only with the purpose of rendering Good to the fellowman, oblivious of Self totally, and feeling that, when one's very best is accomplished,

there is, after all, only an approximation made to that self-sacrifice which is the Goodness of the Father.

Here is no exclusiveness, no separatedness, no need of mediation between the Soul of man and the Father who gave it birth. The very worst of men can see God *without holiness*; can be folded in His embrace; receive His kiss; and enter His Home and Kingdom. Nothing here is necessary to a full realization of the Father's likeness save only the child's love and faith, submission and humility; *to be a true child to the Father*.

The gulf between the Hebrew and the Christian standard of the perfect human character is thus seen to be immense. Jesus showed the chasm to be as wide as that which divided the Priest and the Levite from the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 30-37), the Pharisee from the Publican (Luke xviii. 9-14), the Elder Brother from the Father (Luke xv. 11-32). The difference was and is exactly the difference there existed in Jesus' day between the High Priest and the 'little child' whom He set in the midst of His disciples as the only human representative of Himself and the Father-God who sent Him.

The disparity between the ideal of Jesus and all other ideals of perfect human character is thus that disparity which lies between the natural and the artificial, between what springs up spontaneously out of the life in things, and what is put into shape by man according to his rationalized thought and conception. When we ask, Which of these Idealistic 'Perfections'—the Prophet-Priest of the

Hebrews, the Poet-Philosopher of the Greeks, the Emperor-Lawgiver of the Romans, or the 'Little Child' of the Gospels—conforms most to the Excellence of universal Nature, or to the superlative standard of Goodness portrayed in the Sermon on the Mount and in the Hymn to Love in 1 Corinthians xiii? we have no hesitation in deciding that the child is, indeed, not merely a possible competitor with the others, but the only possible Ideal, and that the others are abortions.

We wish to emphasize these two concurrent expressions of Jesus's Ideal perfection, Universal Nature and the Child. They stand in His mind for the whole field in which His ideal of the good and perfect life prevails. They do so because the principle of Fatherhood is supreme in them. Nature is indeed His child of Eternity, while the babe is His child of to-day. But both are filled with His Life and Love.

Perhaps no two things are more closely related to each other than Nature and the child-mind. When a man really finds his true self, he discovers himself to be a child, and for the first time in fullest sympathy with all Nature. He has then complete affinity to it. For the most childlike heart is the one which approximates nearest to the eternal Centre of universal being. Nature has only speech for the child-ear, and all her loveliest visions are for the child-eye. The freshness of Spring, the full health of Summer, the pulsing vitality of herb and tree, of bird and beast, the luscious fruits of Autumn, the stern grandeurs of Winter,—all bring man into the bosom of infinite mystery, but the

bosom is a mother's, and he feels there the awakening for him of the full and perpetual childhood. The throb of her universal life comes from the cradle of that same peace that passeth all the understanding of the man, though not the experience of the babe. Jesus, the Child, could only leave such peace to children, for no others can receive it. Only with the child and with Nature does the Father make His abode. It is a common sentiment that all the poets must be Nature's true children. For no other spirit than the child-spirit can hold communion with or understand the language of the dawn, the sunset, the roar of woodland life, the music of the sea, the splendour of the midnight sky. It is first necessary to become as a little child in order to apprehend Nature's truth. Hers is the earliest path to true 'holiness.' She does nothing wrong, knowing no error; and the poet, the philosopher, and the artist, prostrate themselves before her as the only fountain of perfection and infallibility known to them. She does good only, scorning man's margin marks of 'evil,' and she has never brooked a lie. And there is no cessation to her fulness. She gives of her sacrifices of life to all unceasingly, and without 'merit'-reservations. She bears no grudge. She evinces no consciousness of having been wronged. Every race, irrespective of colour, or culture, has a place in her mother's breast, and feels the unflagging fulness of her life. And she is as perfect in the small as in the great, in the individual as in the universal, in the flower by the hedge as in the measureless worlds of infinite space. In the

thought of Jesus, Nature, perhaps, is not divisible from the conception of God. He equates Nature with the Father, or rather, where all others have seen 'Nature,' Jesus has seen only the 'Father,' just as, similarly, where all others have seen 'Man,' Jesus has beheld only a 'child.' In the infinite perspective of His thought, ranging across all Nature and human nature, the defining points in its centre and circumference are the Father on the one hand, and the Child on the other. And they stand for the perfect ideal of life here and hereafter.

CHAPTER VI

JESUS, JUDGE OF SIN

THE perfect human character, conform to the Nature and Character of the Father, may now be regarded as Jesus' Ideal towards which He would lead all human kind. He sets this MARK before Him, personalizing it in Himself; and, consequently, to 'miss the mark' (*ἁμαρτάνειν*) (*Hamar-tanein*) is, in His System of Life, the grand mistake. This introduces us to the question of SIN.

The progress of religious belief has in all ages been one from darkness to light. Man himself considered as a child is doubtless the true path to Deity. 'All comes by the body,' says Whitman. Revelation is first Incarnation. In a kindred sense, a definition of Sin in its changing, and often contradictory course through history, might lead to a plausible estimate of man's parallel conception of God, just as the darkness of the shadow is, in general, a measure of the light's intensity. 'We can only know God well by knowing our sins,' as Pascal puts it. But one might go further. It is possible, indeed, to colour the face of Deity with our own thought, just as a form of God may be created out of the fiery mists of human passion,

and worship become finally a devotion to an expanded Reflex of ourselves. There is much, perhaps, in the Great Creeds of Christendom directly due to this tendency.

And if it is so with regard to the conception of Deity, we may safely assume that kindred tendencies are, and have been at work in every stage of the development of religion in the Race, to develop and determine the conception of Sin. It is a conception, indeed, which may be viewed as never altogether fixed, but as constantly changing its weight and perspective on a rising or falling balance in the human judgment. There is nothing 'good' but has been called 'evil,' and nothing 'evil' but has been hailed as 'good.' Some 'Sins' have actually risen in the polity of human life like clouds in the heavens, and again have passed away from the thoughts of men like dissolving mists; what was deemed 'evil' changing with a changing judgment into 'good.' The higher the 'good,' also, the more horribly 'evil' has it often been adjudged. Most of the words and acts, for example, of Jesus, were 'Sins,' and 'blasphemies,' and works of a 'devil,' in the judgment of the most enlightened minds of His age.

But variability in the conception of 'Sin' is not more pronounced a feature in its history than are the degrees of intensity which have characterized its expression in religious profession and devotion. A sense of Sin! Has it ever at any time been lacking in the human soul? Does it not lie like a pall over all that man has brought forth in Time? Its shadow falls everywhere. It blights the joys

of the cradle, and makes dense the gloom of the grave. It clouds the heart of man; it has darkened his pathway through the centuries; it has determined his vision of God. It is the sharpest weapon in the hands of Death; and the profoundest minds have sought in vain to understand the mystery of its existence. Many, like Ruskin, have feared that its consequences in the universe must be endless, even though as a cause it may cease. There is perhaps no war or struggle known to the history of the world comparable for a moment to that prolonged wrestle of the Soul of Man, through countless forms of creed and worship, in order to attain for himself the Faith that Sin is not, after all, a greater power than the Creator. Even to-day the victory is not quite triumphant on the side of the Deity. The sorrow and passion of the conflict still veil our noblest intellects, and in Poetry, Philosophy, Science, and all Literature, sacred or secular, there are seen and felt innumerable symptoms of this pessimism. Many good Christians go down to death with such doubts beating like drums in their hearts.

It was so from of old. If we ascend the Mount of Transfiguration and stand in the mystic-radiance which clothes that weird scene, the whole past world by contrast lies in Night. What light is actually visible across the centuries beyond appears like a Milky Way of smoking sacrifices, stretching lurid and far into ancient chaos to testify to the power of a 'Sense of Sin' over the spirits of all flesh. But Fear never yet has seen the face of the true God, and Love incarnate alone discerned the

Father's face where Fear beheld an Ogre. It is the misery of the Ancient World that Love never was permitted to conceive or interpret the Eternal to either Heathen, Pagan, Jew, or Gentile. There was no deity in Israel, India, Persia, Scandinavia, or anywhere else, but was constantly beheld in internecine conflict. Deity was associated with the scourging lightning, the leaping flame, the dripping knife, the bituminous gulf, the withering wind, and the wrath-rent mountain.

Intensity of the 'Sense of Sin' is believed by many to have been found deepest in the Hebrew Religion. The causes of this intensity could only prevail, however, as far as the Hebrew conception of God and the perfect human character rendered it possible, and with the coming of Jesus, and the higher vision of the Eternal, and His relation to Man which He revealed, the intensity of the Sin-Sense in the Christian surpassed the same emotion in the Hebrew devotee as far as the passion of remorse of the Hebrew exceeded the Sin-Sense in all other forms of worship. We search in vain through the Old Testament, we venture to think, for concrete examples of such poignancy of the true Sin-Sense as are found in the case of the woman who bathed our Lord's feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair; in the excruciating grief of Peter when his Master looked upon him on the night of His Arraignment; and, above all, in that whirlwind of agony which seized the soul of Judas when he realized his betrayal of 'innocent blood.' For it is the vision of Love which can alone reveal to the spirit of man the gigantic pro-

portions of 'Sin,' and every measure of iniquity furnished by either life or law must become feeble, as a power over the heart, when compared with the revealing Love of the Father as declared in the Person of Jesus. The sense of Sin is deep enough perhaps in the Law-abiding Elder Brothers, but it is a bagatelle compared to the passion which bows the heart of the returning Prodigals. And it is the different conception of God in each soul which creates the degree of varying intensity of the Sin-Sense. For if man had had no consciousness of an Excellence beyond his own, the sense-of-sin could have had no existence in his experience.

It is this varying conception in man of his relation to a Superiority other than himself which has brought into the sphere of his experiences both the consciousness of Sin and his realization of its different degrees of emotional intensity. Apart, therefore, from man's consciousness of this Superiority other-than-himself, it is impossible to discuss the question of Sin. On what he is conscious of the Eternal, as the highest form of this Superiority, must depend what his consciousness and experience of Sin will be. And the pre-supposition arises at once that the variableness of the Sin-Sense through all ages is due to the varying conceptions of the Supreme Superiority (and *vice versa*), and the corresponding ideal of perfection which it always carries with it, which have prevailed in the religious consciousness of mankind.

The natural deduction from this pre-supposition is that if Jesus brought into the world a conception

of the Supreme Superiority which was unknown to mankind before, He must also have brought with it a new conception of Sin. There is no doubt that He believed and taught that His conception of God never had been known to Mankind until His own coming into the world. Gazing back over the past, crowded as it must have appeared to Him with man's consciousness of Deity, He yet declares 'O righteous Father, the world knew Thee not, but I knew Thee' (John xvii. 25). To the religious Jews standing around Him, boasting of their father Abraham and their descent from 'God' (John viii. 33-44), He plainly declares 'Ye have not known Him, but I know Him' (v. 55). The new conception of God revealed by Jesus made untrue and impossible every other conception of Deity which up till His advent had swayed the minds of the human race. And, consequently, every subordinate principle and practice in man's religious experience should have changed with it. But there is reason to believe that the conception of the Eternal Being, as held by all the Hebrew people, did not undergo any radical or effective change even in the consciousness of the Apostles, even after Jesus' persistent and iterative teaching of the Father-God; and perhaps the full conception of God as Jesus revealed Him has never been thoroughly received into Creed and worship by the Christian Church; and the conception of SIN has, as a result, remained unaltered by the teaching of Jesus. Christendom has taken over the Hebrews' conception of the Eternal Being and with it the Hebrews' conception of Sin done against Him.

This bars the way to every right approach to the subject. The past crushes us to earth in this matter. We have received a legacy of Sin-thought and Sin-judgments from the ancients, and without demur we have accepted it as of absolute and infallible value. And, consequently, the problem of accounting for, or rationalizing the consciousness of, SIN on ancient and abstract bases of 'Justice and Judgment,' or even by the modern tests of 'Morality,' 'Legality,' and 'Will,' becomes more and more embarrassing. Light seems to be only possible, not through philosophical analyses of the human consciousness, nor by deductions from postulates of Law, but solely through the conception of the Eternal Being which is given to us in the Doctrine and Life of Jesus. The nearer we can approximate to a knowledge of the 'true God and Jesus,' the more intelligible will be our attitude to Sin.

Than Jesus no teacher professing to give to mankind a Way of life for Time and Eternity has made fewer references, perhaps, to the 'sins' of men. His most emphatic deliverance upon 'sin' is, undoubtedly, not concerning its condemnation and punishment, as in the Hebrew system, but its Forgiveness. As He has transcended all others in His ideal of the Perfect Human Life, so also has He surpassed the world in His lenient attitude to those who have fallen short of its attainment.

Jesus has assumed also that what we call 'Sin' is not a thing of boundless or endless content. It has limits even within ordinary human experience.

In Jesus, a man, it never begins; in us, men, it may and can take end. 'Sin no more,' said Jesus (John v. 14) to the infirm man. It is one of His commonest assumptions that men may and ought to become perfect as His heavenly Father is perfect.

There is a realm in man, also, according to His teaching, where no sin is, and where, indeed, God Himself abides (John ix. 41, xiv. 23; Matt. v. 43-48; Luke vii. 47). Sin is not, therefore, bound up, for Jesus, within the idea of eternity. Whatever Sin is, finite it is. In the vastitude of things, it can be regarded as a prolonged incident. From the dawn of time, it may be considered as a progressive shadow, a moving dial-index across the universal mind of man, but having no absolute or corresponding place on the mind of the Eternal One. It is by His own command that we are taught to pray for the realization of a SINLESS EARTH. 'Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, as in Heaven so in Earth,' implies that as the 'Kingdom of the Father' increases on the earth, all sin on the earth shall correspondingly decrease towards complete zero, and the sinlessness of the Earth become level to the sinlessness of Heaven.

This conception of Sin as a possible abolition from the Earth, not to speak of turning earth into the similitude of heaven, was unknown to man previous to the teaching of Jesus. Probably, in the inner hearts of men, it has never yet been accepted as a truth. As a practicable ideal, perhaps no follower of Jesus has yet accepted it as possible to himself. But that it is practicable to the human soul Jesus demonstrated to the world

in the sinlessness of His own person as a man, and as a Son of Man.

Jesus, a man, has clearly no consciousness of sin in Himself, and throughout His teaching He constantly assumes that all men may be as He is before God. He never assumes a perfection beyond that of the Father, but this perfection He declares to be possible to all (Matt. v. 48). His deepest desire, as it is His crowning ideal, is that men may 'be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me' (John xvii. 21). Moreover, He does not assume any other relation to the Father than that child-relation which He accredits to all men. 'My Father and your Father' (John xx. 17). It was, therefore, possible to Him as to all men to will differently from the Father's Will. 'Not My will,' He prayed, 'but Thine be done.' 'Sin' was thus as possible to Jesus as to any man, and He, having lived a real human sinless life, is able to show the world the Path by which all may be sinless likewise.

Such a general view of the attitude of Jesus towards 'Sin,' in His consciousness, example, teaching, and expressed ideal, predisposes us, at the start of our inquiry, to the conviction that from the Apostles downwards the conception of SIN as it is expressed throughout the history of the Universal Church has not coincided with the same conception in the mind and consciousness of Jesus.

As a concrete fact, 'Sin' is an act repeated endlessly in the customs of life many ages before the idea dawns upon the human mind to call such act either right or wrong. In the infancy of both the

race and the individual this is the historical course it follows. Sin never comes first into consciousness *as sin*. It is first a thought or an act born into experience through the impulses of life, and wholly in the interests of life's necessities and progress. The thoughts and acts which we now designate Murder, Stealing, Lying, Adultery, Fornication, *et hoc genus omne*, were all present in common life ages before any consciousness arose in the human bosom to define these thoughts and acts as 'sins.' The forces of life are rampant and imperious, and fill innumerable pages in universal history long before the power of reflection is evolved which decides these experiences to be either good or evil. Life as a vital impulse dictates these mental and physical motions independent of any relation to any other being, divine or otherwise.

But sin, or a consciousness of good or evil, is impossible until relationship with some other is experienced. Life begins with one; Sin with two. *So long as the personality is unrelated, no 'conscience' is conceivable.* To dwell in a universe alone would be to abide sinless, for self would be free, and a fountain of moral law to itself. Such a person would be as God. It is relatedness to some other self which creates duality of interests, and, out of this commingling of two lives, thoughts and feelings are born which ultimately crystallize into a 'conscience' as to what is to be deemed good or evil. Thus, no moral consciousness transcends relationship, human or divine, and all relationship is a correspondence which is, has been, and will be modified as the ages run. But, in

general, between such an act, for example, as taking away life, and the similar act which afterwards men brand as murder, there lie millions of years of the history of man. The same chasm lies between them as yawns between the first human life and the beginnings of human judgment.

It is, then, between man and man that a knowledge of sin first arises, and not between man and deity. Men contend with men, in the interests of life and possessions, many ages prior to their consciousness of a 'god.' And in this era of animality, and, later, of savagery, a sense of 'right' and 'wrong' prevails (as it does among animals and savages yet) before any notion of deity has loomed above the horizons of creature existence. At least this is true as regards the period which immediately precedes the savage state, and even the savage cannot be conceived as entertaining a notion of a god prior to the assertion of his sense of right and wrong, as he contends for life and all related to it with his kindred. Man is undoubtedly conscious of being related to man before a similar consciousness arises with reference to a god. The savage would appear to be in the exact condition of the ordinary child in this respect. And the child clearly possesses ideas of right and wrong, owing to its human relationships, a considerable time before a god-thought has entered its consciousness. The great Creator has ever said, 'This is My beloved Son, hear *Him*,' rather than 'Hear Me.' Man is expected to hear man before he hears his God.

How then does an act of man come to be judged

right or wrong, or as a sinful act? The standard of right or wrong—the ethical test of human conduct—has been variously defined in modern times as the arbitrary ‘Will of God’ which is to be found in the Bible. This was also, speaking generally, the doctrine of the Middle Ages. Hobbes believed that Nature rather than reason fixes the end of human action, and deduced his ethical system from the self-regarding impulses of man. Internally, good and evil were determined by his desires and aversions, and externally by the will of the king. Cudworth laid emphasis on the Divine Reason rather than on the Divine Will, while Cumberland was the first to declare that ‘the Common Good of All’ is the supreme end and standard. This view was, later, elaborated by Bentham and Mill. Butler maintained that Conscience and Self-love were the prime authorities of the soul. Locke, following Hobbes, minimised the distinction between good and evil as scarcely more than one between pleasure and pain. To Hume, Utility, in the main, was the test of the morality of action.

With Herbert Spencer we get a new conception of what he designates ‘Absolute and Relative Ethics.’ Absolute Ethics is not wholly concerned with the conduct of actual human beings. Its purpose is to ‘formulate normal conduct in an ideal society.’ This ideal society in its normal conduct produces ‘pleasure unalloyed by pain anywhere.’ ‘Conduct that has any concomitant of pain, or any painful consequence, is partially wrong.’ His general conception of what constitutes right life

is a life determined towards Happiness. Kant's criterion of right conduct is, 'Act on a maxim which thou canst will to be law universal.' Like Price, he holds that an action is not good unless done from a good motive, and that this motive must be essentially different from natural inclination of any kind. 'Duty to be duty must be done for duty's sake' (see Sidgwick's *History of Ethics*, p. 260).

Every one of these standards of right and wrong lies largely in the realm of the abstract. There is the merest proximity to personality. Even the 'Will of God' conveys no conception of His nature and character, and must be considered as an arbitrary detachment from His personality—a detachment which in ethical studies has long acted like a will o' the wisp.

Jesus, perhaps, stands alone in making a person identical with the moral criterion. In His teaching the standard of right and wrong is lifted out of the subjective and theoretical, and becomes objective and concrete. Man, under His system, is no longer necessitated to consult the Code of Horeb, or the innumerable and confusing idealistic standards of conduct which, from the dawn of civilization, have been formulated by the Philosophers and dreamed of by the Poets. Jesus dethrones both Jew and Greek, and places the crown of supreme authority as to perfect human conduct on His own head. '*I am the Way.*' '*If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin*' (John xv. 22). '*If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin.*' '*Follow Me.*'

Jesus had a substantive reason for this reference. For all Law is of necessity subsequent to Being, *and a perfect moral law could only be deduced from a perfect moral life.* All moral law which is formulated upon other data rests upon abstract ideals, and sooner or later must become obsolete and worthless. Jesus did not, however, profess to *originate* a perfect moral law, but He professed to live one, and by His life to reveal a perfect moral law to the world. The life He lived was the life of the Father, and because the Father's was the highest moral life, it became, for Jesus, the criterion of all perfect conduct,—the highest Moral Law. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do. For the Father loveth the Son, and sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth (John v. 19, 20).

All originates with the Father. Jesus walks no pioneer's path. He follows in the footsteps of the Father. What Jesus lived, and wrought, and taught, was not an abstract product of His own thought, or a working-out of some experimental conception from newly postulated ideas, but a concrete Way which He ever found before Him, perfected and prepared. It was a Way the Father had already trodden, though undiscernible in human flesh. Jesus did not merely work out a 'Plan,' under the imperatives of Law. He lived, and wrought, and taught what the Father had already lived, and was yet living, working, and declaring. All didactic expressions, therefore, in the lips of Jesus, concerning 'law,' 'precept,' or 'commandment,' must be considered as deductions

from a previous and continuous Life brought forth in Fatherhood by God's eternal Love. Jesus interpreted Another on behalf of others, and His very presence in a human body was to reveal the Father's Life to the eyes of all mankind.

The teaching of Jesus, then, we believe, bears that *the sin of man is to be primarily tested, not by what is supposed to be God's Law or Work, as these have been variously conceived, but by that Nature and Personality of the Father which Jesus has revealed in His own life and person.* It is the revelation of this Nature and Personality which gives new status and force to any Law calling itself Moral. For, Jesus being the assumed Presence of the Father in the flesh, it is because He is come that all old conceptions of moral law and the perfect life require readjustment to His personality. He boldly defines good and evil by Himself.

The universal consciousness of mankind demanded this personal standard. The perplexing confusion reigning in even the ablest minds of the race regarding the basis of perfect moral life, seemed to point to the impossibility of extracting from the crucibles of religion or philosophy anything approaching to even a semblance of what was desiderated. The instincts of men, conscious of the value of life, have sought for an infallible guide for it. But the facts, so far, prove that out of the womb of personal life alone,—and not merely from the exercise of speculative thought and reason,—can come that permanent personal Order of Life in which all men can find their rest. For unless

good is bound up in personality, human or divine, it seems futile to attempt to translate the conception of it into the forms of either thought or life. Without a personal standard of what is good, no conception of evil is possible to us, seeing that we can only judge a thing as evil by first postulating a good. Consequently, to make a Law, or a Code of laws, a test of what is right or wrong, good or evil, holy or sinful, is to set up a standard which itself must be judged right or wrong, good or evil, holy or sinful, by the Personality and Nature of that Being who gives it force and a sphere of jurisdiction. The Law which judges man must, in the first place, be itself judged by, and harmonized with, the constitution and life of the Eternal.

Jesus has no difficulty in showing that all conceptions of moral life previous to His own were inferior and totally inadequate. They were moral Accommodations, and helpful enough in a transitional period of human moral progress, but they were devoid of that comprehensibility which sweeps-in the whole nature of man, and they made no pretence of having attained to a Central Imperative or Moral Unity. Jesus found this Primal Imperative and Moral Unity in His own Person. He illustrates this by declaring that, apart from the Father, His own words and works have been said and done by no other one (John xv. 24). Therefore, only He Himself could be the standard or the measure of their moral value. That is, He held up His life, not to an ideal, or some highest standard of moral law, but to the test of the

personal nature of the Father. For, with Jesus, the aim, or chief end of man, is not indefinitely 'to glorify God and enjoy Him forever,' but simply to become like the Father through His Son (Matt. v. 45-48; John xvii. 21-23).

It is worthy of emphasis that He, *as a human being*, professed to transcend all previous standards of goodness, not because He had conformed perfectly to a system of Law, revealed aforetime to mankind, but because He had conformed perfectly to the Nature and Person of His Father in heaven. This truly is the only *absolute* Standard of either what is good or what is evil. All else, Law included, is relative to HIM. For God may conceivably change His law, or Will, but it is not conceivable that He might change Himself.

The origin of all good is, therefore, according to Jesus, the Nature, or Being of God, and, conversely, what is not good, that is, evil, or sin, must be judged by the same standard. There is no criterion beyond this, 'If *I* had not come, they had not had sin.' The personality of Jesus, as the only possible Personality of God apprehensible to knowledge or experience, by its very existence, judges and determines what is for man 'good' or 'evil.'

It is sometimes assumed in ethical discussions that Good and Evil exist substantively. To Jesus they only exist relative to our conception of a Substantive. They are only conceivable as we are able to conceive God. He is. Good consequently exists for man as a characteristic of his

relatedness to Him, but it has no substantive existence for either God or man otherwise. To Jesus there is only one good. It is the good One—God (Mark x. 18; Matt. xix. 17; Luke xviii. 19). *The one Good is a Person. All else is, therefore, relatively Evil.* Jesus undoubtedly puts Himself into this relativity, not because He is or can be convictedly 'evil' to man, but because, absolutely, He is conscious that He never can be as 'good' as God. 'Why callest thou Me good?' or, 'Call thou Me not good' (Mark x. 18) is His manner of expressing this consciousness, and it is confirmed in His complete submission to the will of God in the garden of Gethsemane. No doubt, as far as man is concerned, Jesus must always remain as the final Good, because we believe Him to be the supreme manifestation of that Good One whose goodness was so absolute to Himself; but He alone is responsible for the value put upon the designation 'Son of Man'; and His avowed selection of the name for Himself carries with it His consent to a relationship which cannot be conceived as identical with absoluteness.

But, God, *as* God, the Absolute One, cannot be, as Jesus was, conscious of the existence of either good or evil. He can only be conscious of Himself. If He possessed a consciousness of being Good, it would argue a reference to some standard of good and evil apart from Himself. But He can only refer Himself to Himself, a process which would result in goodness and God being identities. Moreover, if He were conscious of goodness, He should also be conscious of evilness as the necessary

correlative, but this consciousness in an absolutely good God is unthinkable.

We seem justified then in assuming that God is conscious of His own existence; He is all there is: but that He does not regard Himself as either 'good' or 'evil.' Jesus never represents God as being conscious in this way. He nowhere interprets Him, for example, as saying 'I am Holy,' 'I am Good,' or even 'I am God.' All such expressions, in the Old Testament and elsewhere, must be set down as due to an inferior conception of Deity, and in no respect to be considered on the same plane of vision with the God-Idea of Jesus.

Next to the reference to the Absolute Good by Jesus, it is most important to have His definition of the Sole Source of Judgment. God, in the system of Jesus, does not judge even Jesus, and Jesus maintains this characteristic of Him in all His functions of Fatherhood, for He declares that 'The Father judgeth no man' (John v. 22). The judgment of the Absolute One, whom Jesus styles 'My God,' is an unknown thing either as judgment on Himself or on Man. For Jesus refuses to see God in any other aspect than as a Father; and a father as a father does not judge. God in Fatherhood begets, He gives life, but He never judges. Indeed, by the nature of the case, we could not affirm that, in Jesus' teaching, God is either King or Judge unless Jesus had revealed Him as reigning and judging. But He has never so revealed Him. God gives to His Son a kingdom, and Jesus teaches us to pray that the Father's kingdom may come,

but the Father is nowhere shown as King, or wielding the kingly powers. The Father delivers all judgment unto the Son, but Jesus alone reigns in the kingdom of God, and is alone King, and He also is the sole Judge of all men, either here or hereafter.

God, the Absolute, is, to Jesus, never seen moving on the lower plane of relative things. The relatedness of the *Father* is alone taught by Jesus. God loves, and God gives life, both love and life being independent of time, and in both functions He is Father to His Son; but being King over the Son, and ruling Him, is not any part of His motions, nor is His judging Him, either in word or work.

The reason is obvious. If God were His King, then Jesus was not a son, but a subject; but the personal relation of Sonship is the prime and final purpose in all Jesus' teaching. And to suppose Him as coming under the sceptre of God as His Judge, is to subvert and overturn the position which He invariably maintains of having all judgment given into His own hands (John xvii. 2, v. 22; Matt. xxviii. 18). Jesus Himself then sits alone on the throne of judgment, but He is not judged, although He lives and moves and has His being, as an ordinary human being among human beings.

A few passages, some of doubtful authenticity, have been adduced to show that God Himself judges man. These are the Unmerciful Debtor (Matt. xviii. 32); the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx. 8); the man without a wedding garment (Matt. xxii. 11); and the Importunate Widow

(Luke xviii. 7). The judgment of the Merciless Debtor is based on the principle, 'With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged,' and 'the Lord delivers His servant to the tormentors,' even as the servant treated those owing to him. It is clearly a lapse from the moral standard of Jesus down to the old law, 'An eye for an eye,' and proves that Jesus is pressing home on Peter's mind, to whom He relates the parable, how inadequate and miserable is the whole system of judgment to everyone adopting it. Jesus is showing the seamy side of the Old Testament conception of God and the way of justice and judgment followed by Yahwé. Infinite forgiveness 'from the heart' is the higher way. But if any one prefers to judge rather than forgive, the Father-God carries forth that one's own judgment on himself. Jesus, at the close of the parable, seems to speak in His character of Father and yet also of Judge to man. God is at least not the author of the original judgment. He follows the human decision. He *administers* the judgment of another. The same principle is active in the case of the man without a wedding garment. The atmosphere is Hebraic, and the spirit of Yahwé governs all. But the man condemns himself in the first place. The king then orders his servants to carry out the sentence which he knew he deserved. But 'the king' can only be Jesus Himself. The feast is, indeed, made for the king's son, but the son is never present at the feast. The reward of a penny to each of the labourers cannot be construed as judgment.

Giving is not judging, and the penny in every case is a gift. 'It is My will to *give* unto this last, even as unto thee.' It was the labourers who passed a judgment upon the householder. 'Thou hast made them equal unto us!' The parable of the Importunate Widow is so much disputed that nothing can be built on it. If true, it must be an accommodation counsel from the Jewish standpoint.

These appear to be the strongest cases where God is believed to be a Judge. If we accept this view, we must contradict all the rest of Jesus' teaching. This restriction of all judgment to Himself is as manifest in His counsels to men as it is in His revelation of the nature of God. His commands in this respect are clear and peremptory, 'Judge not, that ye be not judged.' And His reference seems to be—If God has not judged, it is surely beyond the province of the human function to weigh the brother in the scales of justice. Rather, as Jesus urges, let man strive to imitate his Heavenly Father in loving the enemy, and in laying down power in pity, and menace in mercy. Not to deal justice, but to do good is the high power and example of God.

But in strict truth of fact, *Jesus never brings the Eternal One, the Father-God, into any of His parables.* 'I am the true Vine, and My Father is the husbandman,' is perhaps the one exception. He declares to His disciples that it is not the mysteries of the Father, but of the Father's kingdom, which He parabolizes (Mark iv. 2). 'The kingdom of heaven is like,' is His phrase,

not 'The Father is like.' The sphere of the parable, therefore, is wholly within the relationships of man with man. The actual personality of the Father-God is never present in His parables. We are not justified, consequently, in interpreting them according to the dogmatic dialectics of the Church Creeds, and evolving 'Father, Son, and Holy Ghost' out of the various *dramatis personae* which Jesus employs. He Himself gives two examples of explaining a parable, in the 'Sower' and in the 'Tares of the field' (Matt. xiii.), which ought to be sufficient pattern for all commentators. And as He interprets them, no personage is involved higher than the Son of Man, the devil, the angels, and man. Even in the parable of Lazarus and the Rich Man, although we pass the bounds of the grave, the material given is solely human.

Moreover, in the parable of the prodigal son, the 'father' there has never a touch of the supernatural about him. His nature and character, his acts and words, owe nothing to the divine or to the superhuman. Yet Jesus shows that this wholly human father had it in him to rise to that perfection of loftiest human relationship which blends with the highest ideal in the mind of the human race, and which He Himself, it is sometimes supposed, did not profess to surpass. The greatness of this premier parable is not in what it indicates of the excellence of the Father-God, but in what it maintains of that fathomless goodness which slumbers in the human soul. And that it was intended to apply only to human relationship

is evident from the reproachful remark of the Pharisees, 'This man receiveth sinners, and eateth with them,' which was the immediate cause of its creation (Luke xv. 2).

It is the same problem of wise human relationship which lies at the foundation of such parables as the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 30), the Great Supper (Luke xiv. 15), the Unjust Steward (Luke xvi. 1), Dives and Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19), the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. xviii. 23), the Two Debtors (Luke vii. 41), the Pharisee and Publican (Luke xviii. 9), and the Labourers in the Vineyard (Matt. xx. 1). In other parables, such as the Wicked Husbandmen (Matt. xxi. 33), Wedding Garment (Matt. xxii. 1), Ten Virgins, the Talents, the Sheep and Goats (Matt. xxv.), where judgment is passed upon man, the Son of Man can alone be the highest personality involved, for the Father-God does not judge man but has committed all judgment unto the Son. God cannot be the 'king,' for example, in any parable, for He is never a king in the teaching of Jesus, but solely the Father. Jesus Himself alone is King. That is to say, Jesus does not teach that God ever stoops to take upon Himself any other than a Father's,—*i.e.* an everlasting relationship to man,—everlasting because it springs from His own Life, which kingship never does.

And just because the eternal relationship of the Father is everlasting, and the apex of all perfect relationship, the Parables of Jesus are to be understood as declaring every human relationship under the sun to be wise or good, perfect or

imperfect, in proportion to the approximation made by each to this Primal Relationship. Universal human judgment has placed the parable of the Prodigal first and highest, for the simple reason that the 'father' in it co-ordinates the nearest, in his dealings with his two sons, to the perfect relation with Man which the Father-God Himself maintains. But the lesson of all the Parables is not an affirmation of what God is in Himself, or of what He does to man, but a direction of life what man ought to be and to do towards his fellowman conform to the Father-and-Child nature he possesses, and which in itself is 'the kingdom of heaven.' It may in that case be safely assumed that if each man could so act towards every man as the 'father' of the prodigal acted towards his 'sons,' he would come nearer to the perfection of Jesus and of the Father-God, who both transcend the flesh-and-blood limits of relationship which are alone given us in the parable, and love to the height of the absolute love of the All-Father for all His Children. For it is just here where the 'father' in the parable is shown to be only an Approximate to, but not the veritable Personality of the Father-God Himself. There is nothing to indicate that the 'father' in the parable would have loved and acted towards *every* man as he loved and acted towards his own flesh and blood. 'Love one another as I have loved you' is a command which points to a higher love than that revealed in the parable of the prodigal son. Here, indeed, is the true Personality of the Father-God. But it is not in Jesus' parables.

Only He Himself moves there, a man among men. And every reference to 'justice' in them, to reward and punishment, law and pardon, must be taken as applicable to Jesus only, and not to the God, the Absolute one.

God, indeed, is never seen, in the doctrine of Jesus, as conducting this Universe, or treating His creature man, on a basis of 'justice.' This subject is, however, postponed meantime. We must first try to show the sense in which Jesus regards Himself as Judge.

We have asserted that, according to Jesus, God does not, and man must not, judge man. Jesus Himself alone is Judge. But, on the other hand, *the sense in which He judges* man demands our discrimination. There is no analogy to it to be found in the usual processes of our ordinary courts of law. Jesus is not, indeed, a judge in the common acceptation at all. He is never found, for example, saying, 'I am your Judge' in the same way that He says, 'I am the Good Shepherd.' He seems to take up the sceptre of judgment with great reluctance. To one who asks Him, 'Master, bid my brother divide the inheritance with me,' He replies, 'Man, who made Me a judge or a divider over you?' And, again, 'If any man hear My sayings, and keep them not, I judge him not, for I came not to judge the world, but to save the world' (John xii. 47). In grave rebuke He says, 'Ye judge after the flesh, I judge no man. Yea, and if I judge, My judgment is true' (John viii. 15). Nevertheless, 'the Father hath given all judgment unto the Son' (John v. 22), and

'authority to execute judgment, because He is the (or, a) Son of man' (John v. 27).

It is in the vision of final judgment, which He Himself describes, that these apparent inconsistencies are rendered intelligible (Matt. xxv. 31-46). The Son of Man comes in His glory, all nations are gathered before Him, and He thereupon *separates* them one from another. But, in our usual sense of judgment, He does not strictly *judge* men. He merely separates. He divides. The characters of men are already judged previously as to their being sheep or goats, wheat or tares. He does not, for example, deliberate upon evidence before Him, and then judge 'Thou art a sheep,' or 'Thou art wheat,' 'Thou art tares.' He, in reality, does not judge, but *'executes' a judgment. This judgment is the foredone judgment of Men* in the continuous building of their character, to which He constantly refers as His guide in *executing* their final separation. 'Inasmuch as ye *did it* unto one of these My brethren,' or, 'Inasmuch as ye *did it not* unto one of these least.' The decision as to being 'wheat' or 'tares' was carried out by men themselves on the earth, and in their lifetime; but both were permitted to grow together until the Harvest. He then separates them congruent to His own standard, 'for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you' (Matt. vii. 2). Jesus judges 'out of man's mouth' (Luke xix. 22; Matt. xxv. 26). Men's own words judge or acquit (Matt. xii. 37; xxii. 12).

The reason which He gives in John v. 27 for wielding this 'authority' of executing judgment and for thus dividing man from man, finally, is of the first importance. It is '*because He is a son of Man.*' His judgment, or act of separation, does not derive its force from His being Divine, but from His being Human. Moreover, His act of separation is referred constantly, not to a broken law, nor to an offended God who seeks satisfaction to His outraged justice, but solely to the judgment of man himself. 'For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.' Neither God's own absolute judgment, nor that of Jesus, is made the basis of the LAST JUDGMENT, *but only the judgment of man.* Jesus, as final Arbiter, appeals to Humanity. It may, indeed, be averred that He acts under the authority of God, and thereby judges Divine judgment, but both His language and the circumstances of the occasion exclude such an assumption. He particularly specifies those before Him in the final Separation as His 'Brethren.' He also comes as 'the Son of man.' In the Last Judgment all the faces visible, save those of the angels, and all the voices heard, are purely human. The Most Holy Presence is not in that awful scene. But these spiritual phenomena are thoroughly in harmony with what Jesus Himself teaches regarding the Holy Spirit's work in the world. The Spirit was to convict the world of sin, not by referring to a broken law, or to an offended God, but because they believed not on Jesus (John xvi. 8, 9). The reference of final judgment is consistently throughout to a Man, the Son of Man.

The reason seems to be a perfectly natural one. Man can only be judged according to his human capacities and with due regard to the possibilities of his nature. Not from the angel's standpoint must he be judged, nor from that of the perfections of God, but from where he is, and from what he is, as a man. And this is the standpoint of Jesus. He is a son of Man.

We reach here the true sense in which Jesus is a Judge. *It is the life He has lived on the earth which really judges, and it is not judgment by an exercise of His mind. It is by the perfect life which He has lived in a human body* that every man knows his place and character and judges himself either here or hereafter. The Son of man, in His pure manhood, and not apart from humanity in any sense, rears upon the earth a pedestal of perfect human life, such as, by comparison, compels an assent of irreversible judgment in the mind of every man, of his occupying a lower plane of moral and spiritual excellence. The true and final judgment upon all human existence is given by every man upon himself by comparing himself with the Person of Jesus. And in this sense it is clear that Jesus, whenever and wherever He comes, always, of necessity, comes to judge.

The last judgment is thus a judgment of man upon himself, with reference to the highest human life. He comes before the throne of the Son of man perfectly conscious as to his being wheat or tares, sheep or goat, and in such a Presence the nations have no actual judgment, but only final

separation. Jesus is, Himself, 'the Great Gulf fixed.' He *necessarily* becomes the final Divider of men.

A true knowledge, or consciousness, of Sin is in this way possible to a human soul by a personal and rational reference to Jesus. 'If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin, but now they have no excuse for their sin.' 'If I had not done among them the works which none other did, they had not had sin' (John xv. 22-24). By His Words, and by His Works, His Personality was placed before the World as a Perfection, and each human being was henceforth compelled by reference to it to acknowledge himself thereby as either 'good' or 'evil.' If Sin is 'missing the mark,' then the mark missed by any human soul is the standard character of the Person of Jesus.

It seems to be for this reason that Jesus asserts that the Father judges no man. For there is no concrete *human* life of the Father on the plane of human things, and, therefore, the Father cannot be a reference of judgment for the character and conduct of man. The Father does not judge because He is not a Son of Man. By the fact also of His being the Son of Man, Jesus receives authority to *execute* judgment, and being a Son He could receive it only from the Father. But it is authority not bestowed by commission, or delegation, but inherent in the life of the Father given to His Son of Man on earth. The Incarnation of the Father in His Child necessarily carries with it all authority in heaven and on earth (Matt. xxviii. 18).

We have, therefore, no judgment upon sin from an absolute source. Jesus asserts no mandate from the Father to deliver a judgment of any kind upon sin, as a judgment originating with the Father, and to be pronounced upon man in His name. Jesus is, in His own person, as a perfect man, the origin and ultimate of both the knowledge and the judgment of Sin. The Old Testament, indeed, assumes in its 'Thus saith the Lord' that an absolute and final judgment is delivered upon good and evil from the Supreme Being; but Jesus directly negates this assumption in the Sermon on the Mount when He puts His 'I say' above what had been said to 'them of old time.' It is, perhaps, this conception of an absolute judgment as to what is good or evil, taken over into the Christian Church from the Hebrews, which has done so much to warp the view of sin in the minds of all Christians, and which has tended, with the help of the ecclesiastical dogma of Jesus' Divinity, to make it a barrier between Man and the Eternal God. It is, instead, a relation existing solely between Man and the Son of Man.

The high claim of Jesus is, then, that He exhausts the moral ideal of man. He claims, further, to embody it in a living human life. He brings it down from heaven to earth, from the realms of consciousness, thought, and reason, to the sphere of the concrete, the experiential, and the practical. The conception of a morally perfect human life is no longer to be referred to a lofty Idealism which is to culminate in an infinite human future, if that were conceivable, but to an actual living man,

a Person of like passions with all men, subject to every experience of men, and whose highest profession and glory is not that He is above man, but is entirely a son of man. The dream of the world of Perfected Human Life is thus realised. The worthiest, as the wickedest, need no longer cry out with that voice of ancient days, 'O, that I knew where I might find Him,' for He is nigh unto all, and not afar off; and His assurance is that all men may be one with Him as He is one with the Father. All good and evil, henceforth, are known as values in the destiny of man, by reference to the life of Him who before God could say, 'I do always the things that please Him,' and before man, 'Which of you convicteth Me of sin?'

Finally, then, we know the absolute God only as far as we know the Father, and we know the Father only as far as we know Jesus, and we can only know sin in relation to that perfect Good which is found alone in His perfect human life. When, also, the Holy Spirit convicts the world of Sin, His sole reference is to Jesus (John xvi. 8-9). Sin, therefore, is a question of relationship, resting ultimately on a Personal, and not on an Ideal basis. Man, and all he is, is judged, not by a Law, but by the life of Jesus, which, for all time, becomes the Law of Human Life. The old conceptions of Sin and its judgment vanish away, and both are seen to move in the sphere of the contingent, and not in the realm of the Absolute and Eternal.

In this teaching, Jesus, as a consequence,

reversed the order of the world's Ethic. He compelled men, henceforward, to build their Moral Ideals on the historical facts of His own life. Formerly, as directed by all the religious and ethical Sages of the Past, men were called upon to rear a perfect human life on the basis of a pre-conceived Moral Ideal, or Moral Law, never previously *lived* in any human experience. They were asked to do what had never before been done. Jesus, on the contrary, simply says, 'Follow *Me*.' 'I am THE WAY.'

CHAPTER VII

PATER-PANTHEISM

WE cannot, however, advance further with the subject of Sin until we have discussed a further question of profound significance which follows on the statements made in Chapter VI., p. 165, viz. That '*a perfect moral law could only be deduced from a perfect moral life.*' 'Jesus did not profess to *originate* a perfect moral law, but He professed to live one, and by His life to reveal a perfect moral law to the world. The life He lived was the life of the Father, and because the Father's was the highest moral life, it became for Jesus the Criterion of all perfect conduct.' That is to say, Jesus saw Good and Evil, as we venture to think, only as far as He saw relationship, and relationship as far as He saw and knew the Father. Finite actions were not compared with an infinite standard, but with a 'son of man.'

The question, then, is, How was this life of the Father made moral to Jesus? How did the Father's life become a Standard, an Ethos, a Custom, or Example for a human being's actions? How and where did Jesus find His historical Pattern for His perfect life carried out in His

mortal, or incarnate existence? How did the Father's life become the actual human experience of Jesus?

Jesus declares that He follows the Ethos of the Father. 'The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He *seeth* the Father do. For the Father loveth the Son, and *sheweth Him all things that Himself doeth*' (John v. 19-20). Jesus does not claim that the works which He did upon the poor, the sick, the palsied, the diseased, or that His feeding the multitudes and raising the dead, are His own works. He says they are 'the works of My Father' (John x. 37). 'I must work the works of Him that sent Me.' 'If I do not the works of My Father, believe Me not.' The Father, therefore, must have done them. The works, indeed, are to be the best evidence to men that the Father is in Jesus. Jesus does not merely 'count' or 'reckon' them as the Father's works, in a metaphorical sense, for Jesus professes only to complete or 'finish' the works which the Father has been always doing.

'The Father worketh hitherto, and I work,' is a further declaration that Jesus *follows* the Father as His working Model in all He does. This again is substantiated by such statements as—'For as the Father raiseth the dead and quickeneth them, even so the Son also quickeneth whom He will.' Nay, Jesus is careful, when it is necessary, to point out in what respect His own work differs from that of the Father when such a divergence occurs. This happens, for example, in wielding the important function of Judgment. Jesus divides

His work from the Father's in that He alone judges. This Power is given to Jesus (John v. 27; Matt. xxviii. 18); and we have tried to show in the preceding chapter why this was necessary.

The language of Jesus regarding His model of life and work as being seen and heard in the Father is unmistakeable. 'I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, howbeit He that sent Me is true, and the things which I heard from Him, these speak I unto the world.' 'As the Father taught Me, I speak these things' (John viii. 26, 28). 'The Father which sent Me, He hath given Me a commandment, what I should say. . . . The things, therefore, which I speak, even as the Father hath said unto Me, so I speak' (John xii. 49-50).

Both what He says and does He has heard the Father speak, and He has seen the Father do. He Himself is, indeed, both the Father's 'Word' to, and the Father's 'Work' in the world. For He says, 'My Father giveth you the true bread out of heaven' (John vi. 32). He is the Father's Word and Work incarnate, and is not the *first*, but the *sum* of these to mankind. We have, then, (1) Jesus as Himself the chief of the Father's words and works, and (2) Jesus as following in His historical experience the pattern of words and works which the Father had already, and hitherto, said and done. This means that God the Father had spoken and wrought the same words and works which Jesus spoke and wrought.

Now, this the Father could only do in the sphere of Creation, including in that term what we

designate as Nature and Human Nature. Jesus originated nothing (John v. 19-30). He came not to do His own will, but only the will of the Father (John vi. 38). But the Father's will did not begin with the historical Jesus. The Father had always done the works and spoken the words which Jesus did and spoke. Jesus was, however, the first incarnation of these great things to mankind, and revealed them in such new human medium to the eyes and faith of men, in all their grace and truth. Creation for the first time became in Jesus conscious and vocal of the Father as doing, and as having done all that was done in Nature. The One who was 'awake' in that stupendous Arena, and did 'with His eternal motion make a sound like thunder,—everlastingly,' was not to Jesus merely 'The Mighty Being.' He was His Father, and the Father of all things. How many had seen the same ethereal Vision, and had always missed the ineffable relationship of divine Paternity which Jesus discerned? Since, perhaps, the dawn of emotion in the human soul, the sphere of Creation had been devotionally and intuitionally regarded by mankind as the realm of residing deities or Deity. But the Deity *there* was not believed nor discerned to *be* a Father, nor was He beheld as doing a Father's works. This sprang into human consciousness and found living voice for the first time with Jesus. The dread Almighty Power, the terrible Avenger, the Unapproachably Holy One, the wrathful King, the inexorable Judge, the Curser, the Condemner,—all fled as ghosts before Jesus; and Nature's infinite bounds

became filled with a gracious Presence, a Father; and all Space and Time were seen as a Home in which He and His children dwelt in Love.

Conscious of being a child, Jesus rose, in this consciousness, to the consciousness of the Father, and thus, as Nature in the highest, He became the Embodiment of her highest revelation to the world. The development of man, for the first time, attained to that perfection in Jesus of the consciousness of the Eternal Father, which subsists vocal or voiceless in all visible and invisible things. Jesus is Nature completed or fulfilled, and in virtue of being so, He is the Bearer of her fullest message regarding the Eternal One. He unites her Right and her Might, and vindicates the laws of the Universe as identical with the loftiest morality and the laws of our human nature.

Perhaps the child in its process of development from the blind, senseless, unconscious foetus to the consciousness it ultimately attains of an earthly father, particularizes in the *one* what has taken place in the *many*, in universal Nature. On a vaster plane of time, the Life-Cell has developed upwards to the Man's consciousness of the Eternal Father in Jesus. But in every case, individual or racial, if the Father had not been first in the Life, He never could have been found in the consciousness. In truth, it is just in the fact of the Father being found at last in human consciousness that we find the strongest proof of His having been first in the Life. Life is only possible because there is first Fatherhood; and there is consciousness of His Fatherhood in man, and in the Son

of Man, because the Life declares Him; but, clearly, Fatherhood cannot be a consciousness in every life, for the reason that every life, say, of plant or animal, is not conscious of being a child. Until Man has seen this child-relationship to the Eternal revealed in his own life, the Eternal Father as a God-conception is impossible to his consciousness. But beyond all question, when man has reached this relationship, no discovery can transcend its importance either for this or any other world. It was the affirmation of this relationship of child to the Eternal, and so of Fatherhood in God, which marks the teaching of Jesus as the greatest in history; and it is in Nature, through her ultimate expression in Himself as her child, and in the Life which is hers, His, and the Father's, that He most devoutly reads the divine revelation.

There does not seem to have been any hiatus, at any time, in this development of the moral consciousness of the human race, any more than in the individual foetus. Soul is in all bodies, but the evidences of it are not always palpable, nor discernible to either eye or reason. But one fact must forever remain irreducible, viz. that because life is there, fatherhood must be there also, and that, therefore, every form of life, in any shape, must be a child of a father. And if of the earthly, then also of the Father who is in Heaven. Of the birds, Jesus could say, 'Your heavenly Father feedeth them,' and thereby indicated no break in that perspective of life which through beast and man rises to a common absolute Source in the Father whom He sought to 'declare.'

For, according to Jesus, Nature's resident God, the Father, had always been a Father in Nature as well as in Man; but only man, through Jesus, had attained to consciousness of the grand reality. Similarly, the Father, throughout the vast ages of past time, had always wrought the works which Jesus wrought, notwithstanding that man had never discerned or understood them to be the Father's works. 'The world knew Thee not' (John xvii. 25) is really a statement of absolute truth as regards the Father in man's consciousness; for whatever consciousness of the Eternal One as Father might be existent in the world before Jesus, it was not a consciousness which was founded in the child-relationship that is traced through Life common to the earthly and the Heavenly. That the world should believe and see the Father in these words and works of Nature and of Human Nature, of which He Himself was the highest Unit-Embodiment, was perhaps the most arduous part of the task to which Jesus addressed Himself.

And it must be admitted that He takes the natural path in approaching it. No thunderous, conventional portents herald His ministry. No startling shrubs in flames give forth to Him mysterious and menacing oracles, as He walks the hillside. No spectacular assemblies are convened to hear His divine message from awe-inspiring precipices, enveloped in smoke and darkness. His vision of the Father lies open in every babe upon its mother's knee; in every blade of grass which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven; in every lily of the field; in every

season of sowing, and reaping, and harvesting the fruits of the earth. No angel comes to Him with dispensations of His 'Plan of Salvation.' He discerns the realm of Creation, and the great ocean of Life flowing onwards there forever, and viewing the unending outpouring of measureless gifts of beneficence and gracious powers of goodness, swelling vast between heaven and earth; the sum of it all being the 'little child'; it was inevitable that He should equate that stupendous Good with the Father-Name, which, highest on Earth, concentrates, for human thought, His conception of Life as an Absolute Source.

'These, as they change, Almighty Father, these, are but the varied God.'

Jesus, as we have said, knows no impersonality called 'Nature,'—an impersonality which, as it is the name for our biggest Ignorance, has been the deepest reservoir perhaps of all Scepticism. No such thing exists for Him. He knows only the Child, and the Father in and through the Child. Neither is the Supreme Being a mere spectral 'Immanence' or 'Transcendence' in Nature. What He knows of Nature and Human Nature is the All-thing He designates 'My Father.' Universal Nature is to Him the Oldest as well as the Newest Testament to this profoundest of all truths. For Father and Child, their personalities and relationships, include for Him all that we mean by Finitude. That which He does not know, or does not reveal, of the Unseen and Supersensible, He lifts into the Absolute by the term 'My God.' As a consequence, He does

not acknowledge any division between Mind and Matter. He addresses everyone and everything *as a person*. The child and the stone have the same Father, and the same relationship to Him through the same life of the Father. To minds, indeed, inured by custom to speak profanely of Nature as a 'mechanism,' and as 'dead' and 'unconscious,' this consciousness in Jesus of seeing in every object in Nature a source of available response, intelligible through ear and answer, is very amazing. But He is not emitting mere rhetorical apostrophes when He addresses the Disease, the Stone, the Sea, the Mountain, and the Tree, in the same personal language which He uses to His disciples. To Jesus they are all children of the same All-Father, all conscious enough of Him, but not so conscious of each other. For while the Father makes Himself visible to the babes and sucklings, and gives them their perfected praise, He lays His finger of repressive silence upon the stone and dooms it to dumbness. Otherwise, its crying out would quickly reveal to all the child it is.

This vast creational fabric, in its universal extension, variety, and complexity of being, is not to Jesus a headless, heartless, lifeless Force or Appearance, manifesting itself merely as some Ens or Supremacy. It is THE FATHER, and it is so, not because it is 'Divine' and multiplex and infinite, but because it is *One Life, One Spirit, and One Love*, which, as *One Personality*, repeats itself and reappears in each object within Itself as the life-cell repeats the man within the blood. The source of life, love, and law (His Great

Words), which Jesus finds in the child in its father-form, He sees also in the wider source which we denominate 'Nature,' and robes it in the same Father-name. It is unified in the personality of man, though of finite extension, and complex in the elements of his body and spirit; and, again, on the eternal scale, it is unified in the personality of the Father as comprehending all things. Whereas man had known only one imaginary thing to be a divine being, and all creation, for most part, dead, common, and unclean, Jesus knows all Existence as Divine, and as the Father. Moreover, He speaks and acts throughout as holding the faith that the All of existence is, in its absolute *reality*, not merely spirit, but THE SPIRIT.

The Hebrew conception that the earth was cursed, and the Greek idea that matter was separated from mind, have given Christendom obliquity of vision in looking upon Nature. To both Greek and Hebrew, Nature is limited, inert, dead, and blind. Deity to them is associated with it in the same way as man is. Both stand apart from it, and are distinct from it. Deity, to the Greek, is immanent in Nature, and transcends it to the Hebrew. God is within Nature in the one case, and above it in the other. Neither the Greek nor the Hebrew conception of God ever marries with Nature and becomes one. Hence there is a gulf forever between their Deities and the All we call Nature. There is no unity, no common life, nor common pulse of passion as a consequence. Neither God nor Man is *identical* with Nature. There is a bottomless chasm running through their

Universe. The Greek does not even reach the unity of one sole deistic personality. The Hebrew discovers the One God, but fails to find any unity between Him and the Creation He calls into existence. The two stand always apart and divided from each other. The nexus of Life is not given. Life is given, but it is not God's own life. He creates it. Power on the one side, passivity on the other, is all we discern.

But it is just through the nexus of God's own Life that Jesus finds the unity of the Universe; God and the All being summed up in FATHER and CHILD; two personalities united by and in one Life. For Jesus speaks and acts on the faith that Life is everywhere, and in All. Of course, He far surpasses our common human faith in this respect. He easily carries the world with Him in His conception of a living thing when He addresses men. The bacteriologist might possibly keep Him company as He exorcises Disease; and the botanist would acknowledge His assumption of life in the Tree, though probably would leave Him when He spoke to it as a *person*. The poets would recognise Him as one of themselves when they listened to His rebuke of the winds, though His assumption that the sea would submit to His 'Peace, be still,' would likely leave them all far behind; but His confidence in His disciples' word of faith to uproot the tree and the mountain, and His belief in the repressed passion of the stone, would decidedly leave Him alone in a heaven of sublime trustfulness towards which human souls have not yet found a pathway. The Master still

seeks in vain for the small grain of faith so essential to all in their realization of Universal personal life.

Men lack Jesus' faith in discerning who Nature is. Man cannot admit that God is Father to any creature except himself, and still less can he receive that his own personality holds in it anything but himself. He declares he is divisible from God, and also divisible from man in his personal identity, and that he is himself and no other. He declares that what he is not conscious of in himself, cannot exist in himself! His consciousness declares 'I am I,' therefore he thinks it must follow, 'I am all that is in myself.'

Jesus moves His faith over a deeper substantive than our consciousness, or all that is included in human thought, and from this base He does not recognise that one personality is divisible, or isolated from another, or that any personality is apart from the Father's. 'I and My Father are one.' 'I am in the Father and the Father in Me.' 'The Father abiding in Me.' He affirms the same commingling of personalities with regard to men. 'In that day ye shall know that I am in My Father, and ye in Me, and I in you.' He would not have it otherwise, for He prays 'That they may be one, even as we are one, I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one.' This, of course, must be a faith to man, and not knowledge. It seems purely a faith to Jesus.

For Jesus does not attempt to define personality by the powers of thought, or consciousness of Self. He stands primarily on Life, not on consciousness.

Life in its origins is not affected in the least by our consciousness, thought, or reason, and has a vast history antecedent to either. It is also in the matrix of Life that Jesus seeks all His doctrines, and as a consequence, they are all primarily irrational, and matters beyond self-consciousness. He Himself comes forth 'out of God' (John viii. 42). 'I came out from the Father, and am come into the world' (John xvi. 28). Let us observe that the teaching here is concerned with His life-origin, not with His authority. He sets it against the claim of the Jews to be counted children of God their Father. He reaches this doctrine through postulating life in Himself. 'For as the Father hath life in Himself, even so gave He to the Son to have life in Himself.' 'As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eateth Me shall also live because of Me.'

That is to say, no man is one to himself, as he imagines. He is only one in another. He dies to live in a Unity. He is one to himself, *in consciousness*, but, *in life*, he is a personality out of other personalities. He is one as the atom is one, a unit out of many other units. Personality, as psychology discerns it, is a postulate of thought, based on consciousness, but the life on which this consciousness itself rests, is itself resolvable into a trinity, viz. Father, Child, and child-father. Any break or barrier in this sequence means not life but death. Every personality is blended with the personality preceding the life-cell, and the personality succeeding in the everlasting flow of life.

Life is given, and it must be given. And personality rests on life, and follows it.

It has not been sufficiently emphasized, perhaps, that sacrifice, as Jesus teaches it, includes the sacrifice of personality. The Father has given up, through His life, His personality in the Son; *else personality had been unknown to His Child, and children*; and, therefore, all must follow the same path of the Father's sacrifice. It is a compulsion from the Eternal Life. It is not to become a vacancy, but to be filled with a higher personality from the Life above us, and, as Jesus puts it, 'to take it again.' Personality is, like life, an eternal Flow, and the more we give away of ourself, the more we receive of the Father. The Father has given *all* to the Son, the Son gives *all* to the other, and in this sacrifice He becomes one with the Father. It has been given to nothing in the Universe to retain even itself. His '*goings forth*,' and ours, are 'from everlasting to everlasting,' in a far profounder sense than the Hebrew ever knew.

'Personal identity' may, indeed, be compared to the river which, to eye, and to thought, is ever the same, but which in actual composition is at no time or point one and the same, though to our consciousness it always appears to be so; or to the sky which, though changing, seems to remain constant to itself through the moving centuries, and is to human consciousness ever the same. So, to Self, we appear to be ever the same personality, and to Thought and Consciousness, a fixed point in a moving Universe. Nevertheless, the

things of life, and our thought and consciousness of them do not coincide, and the power of Jesus' system over men lies chiefly, perhaps, in His preference for the facts of Nature over the temporal postulates of human reason. The personality of which we are so conscious, must be the divine Personality of which He is co-conscious with us, but our consciousness and life are not co-extensive in us, the one moving on a temporal, the other on an infinite plane. Personality flows with life, and so forth again into Life. The personality we are becomes one with other personalities there, and so forever forth into the Father-Personality, which in our faith becomes identical with Universal Life. We cannot, any more than Jesus, view 'Nature' as something apart from our personality. 'Abide in Me, and I in you,' means more than 'Abide in My doctrine, faith, or name.' It is the love-sacrifice of personalities, the giving-up of selves, in admitting the higher personality of the Father.

But if this be so, then Universal Nature must have personality also, co-vital with our own, and be, indeed, the Universal Personality. But this again is only to say, what Jesus always implies, viz. that what we call 'Nature' He includes in His term 'Father.' Did not Jesus Himself, as all things, come forth from Nature?

Perhaps the dread of undeifying and 'materializing' the Deity has prevented devout and thinking men from accepting Jesus' conception of 'The Father' as the Personalization of The All, the Seen as well as the Unseen. Yet in our own days at least, and for several decades bypast, there has

been a decided tendency towards this acceptance, in the strong emphasis laid, first, by the poets and philosophers, on the 'Immanence of God in Nature,' as it is phrased; and second, by the theologians, on the Humanity of Jesus. Inevitably, the pressing quest for a more enduring conception of the Eternal will lead ultimately to the standpoint of Jesus, who, in Nature and in human nature within and around Him, actually and sensibly saw and heard the Father-God, as well as conceived and believed Him. It really becomes more and more certain that any conception of God which is upheld only to the understanding and faith, but blankly denied to the senses, must prove completely inadequate. A true conception of the Eternal Being must be comprehensive enough to satisfy the Idol of the idolater as well as the Absolute Idea of the philosopher, for He is as verily God in the one as in the other. Jesus undoubtedly effected this, and also added that Personal and visible Vitality which is absent in both, when He said, 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.'

And what He affirmed of the visibility of the Eternal Person He also maintained with regard to that Being's works and words. They could be actually seen as well as thought (Luke vii. 22). For the works which men saw Him doing were works which He Himself had seen the Father do, and they but heard the words which He Himself had heard the Father speak (John v. 19; x. 32; xiv. 10, 24). He also said these things to men as a man. But, to Jesus, 'seeing God' did not

imply seeing a particular form of being. His God was evidently as much the child, the bird, the tree, the wind, and the sea, as He was a Name, a man, an image of the mind, a faith, a spirit, a Word. In short, God was *all that is*, a Personal Life Eternal, or, in one term, the Father.

Christendom has never ventured to adopt Jesus' vision of God for her own. She has fallen under the unfortunate Hebrew horror of seeing God in the visible object. In a similar way to that Queen in Shakespeare's play, who saw 'all that is,' yet saw 'nothing at all' of the father-form which Hamlet saw, the Church has steadfastly gazed upon 'All that is' in Nature, and has seen 'nothing at all' of God. Nevertheless, this eternal mystery which is both flesh and spirit, Idol and Idea, Visible and Invisible, Sea and Sky and Soul of All, Jesus, with His bodily eye, as well as with the eye of His mind, beheld and declared as 'The Father.'

'No man hath seen God at any time,' is, therefore, to be regarded as a complaint as well as a statement of fact. Only one man had had the eye to see God, viz. Jesus Himself (John i. 18). Jesus upbraids the Jews in His words, 'Ye have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form' (John v. 37). They were culpably deaf and blind. But of another class He said, 'Now have they both seen and hated both Me and My Father' (John xv. 24). Jesus rests His Doctrine fearlessly upon the evidence of men's senses, and asks John Baptist to accept Himself and Mission, not upon the authority of the Old Testament, nor upon the

predictions and traditions of the Past, but according to what men had really seen and heard (Luke vii. 22). God has ordained the senses to be the surest and quickest path to the passions and convictions of men. Throughout all the past ages, indeed, the Father-God had struggled to be in all ways seen and heard by men, but after all His efforts, it was a grief to Jesus that the world had never known the Father (John xvii. 25), and that in seeing Himself, the Father was not also seen (John xiv. 9). He deplores that none save Himself had seen the Father (John vi. 46). We are, therefore, forced to conclude that Jesus regarded what the eye sees, the ear hears, the mind knows, and the spirit is conscious of, as 'the varied God.' And it must be evident that in this conception of the Father-God as identical with the Universal All, He rescued what has been called 'Nature' from the pantheistic abyss of an impersonal, mechanical, and lifeless 'System,' and raised it to the highest heights of worshipful thought and vision, as an ALL-PERSON, adoringly named of Father-Life, as well as of Eternal-Love. He Himself professed to be in this world to reveal this Father-God, not merely by His word and thought, but by all He was, visible and invisible. He, the child, was all we know of Nature, and all we think as God. Only by Him, indeed, do we know both man and God.

And not only in the particular case of Jesus, but on the universal scale there is a tidal influence at work in man which tends irresistibly towards a realization of the Divine Being through every

faculty of vision; consciousness, intellect, or eye. Faith is not opposed to sight, but struggles to identify itself with it. Faith, indeed, is never fully matured, or 'fulfilled,' until it has brought the 'God' (by whatever name He may be called) out of the infinite vista of His 'transcendence,' through the middle spaces of His 'immanence,' into the clear historical foreground of actual bodily sight. It was the pre-eminence of Jesus that *believing* the Father and *seeing* the Father were identical in the one motion of His nature. He crowned the idolatry of the ages in that, with His bodily eyes, He saw God; not solely in one particular object of universal Nature, but in the All that Nature is; His Father being the All. And He ever longed that His disciples should thus see the Father, and, through the immediacy of His own person—Nature in the highest—He urged their contemplation of Him. 'From henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him.' 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.'

It is undoubtedly this same power of realizing-faith which is at work in the disciples also; in the Transfiguration scene; in the episode of Emmaus; in Mary's experience in the Garden; in Thomas's cry, 'My Lord and my God'; in Paul's vision on the Damascus' road; and, indeed, in every 'vision' of the Divine, beheld during the Christian Era, by inspired and ecstatic souls. In all things, as from eternity, God works yet to reveal Himself. He waits to be seen. He opens every eye for this express purpose. There is true blindness until God is visibly seen. We can always

see God. From everywhere in universal Nature the eyes of God look into ours, lambent with the glory of His light and Love. But it is rarer to believe it is God we see. For we do not see the natural and the Eternal as identities. This is possible only when, simultaneously, spirit and eye, or the sense that acts for the eye, apprehend the Father as Jesus did, by a faith which is identical with sight. When this happens, the human being 'walks with God,' and his experience of 'the glory of the Lord' co-ordinates with that of all the good and the great of the past, who, soaring above all thrall, have gazed upon the Splendour in which Jesus stood when 'He was transfigured before them' (Mark ix. 2-8).

The above view can be partially verified, we venture to think (at the risk of certain repetitions), by asking the question, Has Jesus declared any fact or principle of which Nature is void, always including man under that name?

To begin with, Jesus Himself, as a Personality, concords and co-ordinates with nothing except with that Something we visualise in our thought as 'Nature.' It is impossible to characterize Him by a smaller term. His life, goodness, and power are only paralleled by that of Nature. Nothing equates with Jesus save Nature. He always begins and ends with Nature. Personality He finds in the Child. This is Nature in chief. The child is the Universe in microcosm. But He postulates nothing for Himself except His being a child. To be a child of a Father is His first desire, and the perfection of His being. He is all that Nature is

in the child, and the child is Nature perfected. But he who receives the child receives Jesus, and also receives the Father (Mark ix. 37).

Secondly, His supreme bequest to the world, and to human thought and feeling, is, beyond all question, the conception of the Father-God. But Nature, even considered apart from man, declares clearly, as we have tried to show, the Fatherhood of the Infinite One. The one superlative passion in Nature, as in man, is life: to live, to produce life, and to defend and provide for it. Nothing transcends this either in Nature or in man, if for a moment we consider them as things apart. But this passion of life is the true revelation of the Father in all. For, according to Jesus, as according to science, 'No life can come into being save through life.' His conclusions prove that He had verified it all in His reason. 'I live by the Father.' 'He hath given to the Son to have life in Himself.' Therefore, whatever has life has fatherhood, and can bestow life. So Jesus can say to His disciples, 'Because I live ye live also,' and to all men, 'I am come that ye might have life, and have it more abundantly.' This is in harmony with the finding of all experience, and of all religion, and of all knowledge. Life alone comes out of life. *And Nature asserts this principle as certainly as Jesus does.* This same fact of Fatherhood upheld by Jesus is the one which perhaps is best attested by all the scientific authority of our day, although not attested under that parental nomenclature.

We ask then, Did Jesus receive this revelation of Fatherhood from a source independent of

Nature? On the contrary, the very postulate which He makes in the child as the basal element of His kingdom, and the saturation of all His teaching in the language and spirit of Nature, unmistakeably point to the source whence He derived this truth. Whatever comes forth from Jesus is yet potential in all that Nature is. 'Raise the stone, and there thou shalt find Me, cleave the wood, and there am I.'

But how was it possible for Jesus to derive the personality of the Father from Nature? We wave our hand towards sky and land and sea, and triumphantly assert that there is no personality in Nature, that this Total of Existence is soulless, and devoid of personal feeling. Yet philosophers and poets belaud the testimony of Nature to God as great and good. Nature, say they, is true, just, and motherly. Nature is the voice of God. Nature is God's living garment. 'Nature is Christian,' says Young. Nature is God's written Apocalypse, says Carlyle. She is the grand guide to the highest philosophy, says Kant.

Notwithstanding these pæans, their every conception of Nature steadfastly divides her from God in our thinking. They and we think of God and Nature as Two Objectives. All thinkers, indeed, invariably assume that the personality of God exists apart from 'Nature.' Jesus alone unites these two in one. 'I and the Father are One.' Nature and the Father are One, for Nature and man are one. His vision of the All is not pantheistic, but Pater-pantheistic. 'Whosoever receiveth this little child in My name receiveth

Me, and whosoever receiveth Me, receiveth Him that sent Me.' 'If ye had known Me ye would have known My Father also.' 'And from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him.'

Thus the process of apprehending the personality of the Father in Nature is followed by Jesus through the truth of Nature in the child, and through the fulness of the child perfected in Himself, the Truth. The Father is Jesus, Jesus is the child, the child is Nature, the Universe in essence. Mere bulk proves nothing.

'The oneness between ourselves and Nature is not a thing to be deplored,' writes Sir Oliver Lodge, 'it is a thing to rejoice at, when properly conceived' (*Hibbert Journal*, Jan. 1905, p. 330).

Jesus says in effect, 'Here is the child, for I am He; therefore, the Father must be. I am; and he that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' Jesus equates Himself with Nature through the child on the one hand, and with the Father on the other. He, the Child, the Son of Man, is the sum of Nature, and one with the Father.

It is interesting, also, to observe how closely He identifies the personality of the Father with that wonder of wonders, SPACE. Space, as Kant tells us, is one, and a pure intuition. It is not objective. We cannot see it, or apprehend it by the senses. It is purely intuitional. It is so *à priori*, and not a conception. And as Kant keeps Thought and Being sundered, he naturally classes space among the phenomena of the former. Jesus pursues quite the opposite method, and

identifies space as belonging not only to Being, but to Personal Being.

It is reasonable to suppose that when Jesus used a word as a metaphor, parable, or term of analogy, He had a distinct and clear idea in His mind of what He wished to convey by it. 'Good Shepherd,' 'Door,' 'Vine,' and similar terms, seem to justify us in holding that He had a clear conception to convey to men by them concerning His own person. In the same way He speaks of God as 'Father' and 'Husbandman.' What idea, then, did He have in His mind when He called God 'Spirit'? We say 'Spirit' is unknown and unknowable. We have no conception of what spirit is. Was He then impressing this idea of *unknownness* on the mind of His listener when He said this of God? On the contrary, He appears to connect 'Spirit' as necessary to worship. 'And they that worship Him must worship in spirit.' Indeed, it is hardly conceivable that Jesus could have the intention to convey God's unknownness or unknowableness in this word. For the grand purpose of His life was to reveal God, not to proclaim His incapability of being revealed. His encouragements were quite contrary to this negation. 'I have given to them Thy word' was a matter of the utmost joy to Him. God had sent Him, not to daunt men with His incomprehensibility, but to make the Way to Himself simpler. In the passage in view (John iv. 20-24), He is clearly opposing His own to the exclusive and local conception of God so universal among the Jews and Samaritans. Only at Jerusalem or

at Gerizim, said they, can men worship God. Nay, said Jesus, at neither, for God is a Spirit. The distinct idea, therefore, in Jesus' mind is *God's everywhere-ness* as an object of worship. And it is this universality of God as an object of worship, and His Presence in all space where man may meet Him, and not be alone, that fills up the term 'Spirit,' which He employs. It has no reference to an Unknown in itself. *The universally Present One*, for Man to lean upon and worship, is the conception which Jesus endeavours to convey.

But the point which we wish to emphasize is, that Jesus in this teaching makes use of *Space as the analogue of God the Father*. Space is the everywhere thing, what is ever nearest in Nature, and yet what is ever furthest from man, taking it, as Jesus did, in its commonest acceptation. It is, perhaps, the nearest approach which Jesus makes in words, to declaring that God the Father is the identity of our 'Nature.' Spirit is our most comprehensive term for the Object of our worship, and Space is the most comprehensive term for our view of Nature. God is thus equated, in Jesus' thought of *Everywhere-ness*, or Space, with universal Nature, in the term and conception of Spirit, even as He equates the '*Father*' with Spirit through the conception of the child (John iv. 23, 24). Not even in Space does Jesus find the Impersonal. As He thinks of the Everywhere, He thinks of a Father whom Man may worship in spirit and in truth. Similarly, when He thinks of the Space beyond this Space of the Universe, that is, when He thinks of the Hereafter, He never speaks of it

as 'Eternity,' an empty, impersonal vacuity in which God somewhere exists. Jesus does not know of 'eternity'; all the Hereafter is to Him, the Father. He comes *from*: He goes *to* the Father. He fills up the thought of Space here and Space Hereafter with the one Personal Father-Being: the All.

Doubtless, in ranging Nature, science asserts that she has not found a personality anywhere. The reason is clear. Science knows nothing of life. She does not pretend to know life, and consequently knows less of personality. This is what lies yet unseen and untouched by science, in the child, and was only fully revealed by Jesus. For the truth that lies in the personality of the child is, as we must repeat, the first of all truths for man.

We may see also how Jesus exalts this personality above the conditions of Time. The view which He takes of His own personality is a complex one, but not unintelligible. He is one with man, and again, one with the Father, and yet again, one with, or in, Himself. This last is repeatedly expressed as 'I am.' 'Except ye believe that I am, ye shall die in your sins.' 'When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am' (John viii. 24, 28). 'Before Abraham was, I am.' 'I am that speak unto thee' (John viii. 58; iv. 26). 'That when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am' (John xiii. 19). 'Many shall come in My name, saying, I am' (Mark xiii. 6).

This triple consciousness of being, when referred to time, must necessarily be carried back into

Fatherhood, or Jesus' past; and onwards into man, or the future; as well as into Himself in the present. He conceives His personality as streaming behind and before Him in God and man, Himself being the nexus of both in the minuting present. It is a deduction from His conception of Life. When He speaks of Himself in relation to the Father, He is not an independent and single 'I am,' but an interchanging 'Thou in Me, and I in Thee,' and so, similarly, when relating Himself to man, 'Ye in Me, and I in you.'

It is when He relates Himself alone to Time and its occurrences that He speaks of Himself as an 'I am' above time. He is conscious of existence in any point of time, and before as well as after time. He is before Abraham's day, He is before the world was, He is before the foundation of the world (John xvii. 5, 24). *As regards all past time, He is Anywhen in it.* He expresses Himself similarly with regard to the future. 'I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there ye may be also.' 'I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God' (Mark xiv. 25). 'I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world' (Matt. xxviii. 19). 'The Son abideth for ever' (John viii. 35).

As in the Past, so in the future, He is ANYWHEN in it. He is before and after time, though under its conditions in His present. But we must distinguish between His *belief* in the eternity of His being, and a *consciousness* of His having been

eternal. He believes He was before Abraham, and before the world, but He comes into actual consciousness of His past existence only in the body. He has no conscious *experience* of the past, any more than of the future. His experience is exactly the same as that of every child, but *His belief* is unbounded as to His personal existence both through the Father in the past, and through man in the future. It is the conception of His life as coming forth from the Father in the past, and going forth from Himself into Man in the future, that enables Him to conceive His own personality as moving from eternity to eternity.

But this is to transcend all time, and, indeed, to behold not a mere phenomenon of time, but the never-ending procession of a Divine Personality. *Time*, to Jesus, as well as *Space*, is a Vision of the Father. The child is in reality the only substantive, in as far as it is the procession of the Father's personality, and Jesus realizes Himself as this child. That is to say, for our idea of Time, Jesus substitutes the Father's personality.

It is at this point that Jesus verifies the natural or common consciousness of the race regarding endless life. There is an almost universal consciousness in man that time does not end him. Man *believes* that a future beyond death remains for his personality. But a general consciousness of pre-existent life is not so vivid to the universal mind. This dawns first in the more plastic and contemplative spirit of the Eastern peoples. The Westerns have concerned themselves with the vision of the Future, conform to their practical

instincts. But there seems to be no doubt that the consciousness of pre-existent life is as firmly rooted in the intuitions of the world as is that of post-existent personality. The consciousness of the one must be as true to the fundamentals of our human being as is the other.

Thinkers have often generalized universal Thought into two hemispheres : Eastern or Asiatic, and Western or European. The East, it is said, meditates, the West reasons. The East originates religion, the West pursues philosophy. True to those instincts, the East has mused upon the Past and seen no beginning to the soul. The Eastern doctrine of Metempsychosis does not find the Infinite of the Past a closed vision. But, on the other hand, the vision of the Infinite Future to Easterns shuts in Nirvana. The Westerns, on the other hand, find the Past shut, the new personality being seen no earlier than the day of mortal birth, whereas the Future of it opens out to an infinite prospect. Jesus in His vision of the Soul rose above these limits. To Jesus, consciousness of Father-Life is one, and suffers no ruptures from time, past or present. Birth and death put no chasms through His vision of Life. ' I came out from the Father, and am come into the world : again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father ' (John xvi. 28). ' The Glory which I had with Thee before the world was ' (John xvii. 5). His personality has no beginning save in the Father, who was before the world, and it has no end save in the bosom of the Father. This is simply the expression of that totalised consciousness of which

the Western and Eastern races have grasped the divided parts which 'look before and after.' And it is also, surely, a legitimate deduction that every human personality, as every object in Nature, must hold something within it as old, at least, as universal Nature is herself.

Jesus, as we believe, thus transcends what we term 'Nature,' and knows only Life and Personality, a Father-Personality, the fountain of all life, personalities, space, and time; out of which all proceeds, and into which all returns. Hence His consistent use of personal language when addressing the tree, the disease, the stone, the mountain, and the sea. 'It was necessary,' says Prof. E. Caird, in referring to Hegel's philosophy, 'to show that the kingdoms of nature and spirit are one, in spite of all their antagonisms, nay, it was necessary for him (Hegel) to show that this antagonism itself is the manifestation of their unity' (*Hegel*, p. 128). And it is just this unity which Jesus has revealed in the life and personality of the Father, by postulating Himself as His Child, Nature in chief.

Still, it does not seem essential to a true comprehension of His position to suppose that He had an experiential, or historical knowledge of His pre-existent life, any more than He could have experience of the future. These things well-up out of a consciousness in Him as conditioned as is our own, and they are matters of pure faith resting on a profound contemplation of the mysteries of Life. For, to Jesus, as is evident, what comes by faith is always better attested than

what comes by knowledge. For in reality, as explained above, all knowledge must rest on faith. 'All first principles, even of scientific facts, are known by intuition, and not by reason' (G. Romanes' *Thoughts on Religion*). Jesus asks the world, in short, to accept in faith what can only become facts to it afterwards through experience and knowledge, and in doing so He repeats His 'Follow Me,' in a path of self-consciousness with which He Himself was familiar.

This is corroborated in such expressions as 'He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father.' 'If ye had known Me ye would have known My Father also.' Both 'seeing' and 'knowing' Jesus are futile, unless they rest on that faith by which His relationship to man as Father, Giver of life, is discerned. This process of discerning the Heavenly Father clearly follows the same way of Nature in discerning the earthly father. There is no other possible way to the father-relationship. Fatherhood cannot be by the nature of things an *experience* to the child, and this relationship can only, therefore, come into the experience of all children through faith. It is not a knowledge before it is a faith. And Jesus, like all the sons of men, apprehended His Father in heaven in exactly the same way as the father-relationship is apprehended on earth. The same Father, under the concept of our 'Nature,' fed, as He believed, the birds by 'bread,' and gave all His creatures their 'daily bread,' through the same channel; Jesus Himself, Nature in highest form, being her Bread of heaven. He, the Son of man, was fed by no

other hand than Nature's, and still it was the Father's hand. And so bird, and beast, and man, received life through the same natural, or Father-relationship of God.

CHAPTER VIII

PATER-PANTHEISM (*Continued*)

OUR difficulty in equating 'Nature' with 'The Father' lies, of course, in the absence in her of all appearance of that personality and form usually associated with fatherhood. We cannot blend in our thought the two things as an identity. But, primarily, Jesus does not hold personality and the human form in His mind when He thinks of Fatherhood. Primarily, He postulates LIFE-GIVING; and then fatherhood both in Nature and in man follows necessarily. He lays the foundations of all His teaching on Life. *Life is given*; therefore, all forms of life, together with personality, and fatherhood, and all functions and productions of man and Nature, issue out of this grand, vital fountain-fact. Now, personality, as we think it, is not necessarily bound up with the idea of fatherhood. A man is not a father because he is a person, but because he gives life to another, who becomes thereby a new personality. It is because, as Jesus phrases it, he 'lays down his life' in the child. It is this fact which Jesus asserts in His great 'Father'-word. Whoever

and whatever 'lays down life' in another, conforms to fatherhood, eternal or temporal, and it is this that Jesus professes to do for the world.

And it is not because of personality, but because that Nature is also the great Life-giver, and brings forth the new personality, that she and the 'Father' are identities. Nature is the great Mother, we say, and all the living are her children. It is the same thought expressed by Jesus. 'The Father hath life in Himself.' If we take away the idea of life-giving from both statements, both conceptions of 'Nature' and 'The Father' at once collapse. It is only and solely through the content and principle of life and life-giving that the conception of fatherhood is created for us.

We know absolutely nothing of the content of personality. 'The roots of personality stretch far beneath consciousness into the deep common life of the Universe,—the power not ourselves which surrounds us on all sides' (*Historic View of New Test.*, Lect. I.: Dr. P. Gardner). We summon courage enough to say we are conscious of it. But it is more than a consciousness to us that life is given, and that in the gift of life a new personality is also given. Consequently, in the one who gives life we apprehend the Father. God, to Jesus, is not 'Father' until He gives life. But having given life, the begotten one is thereby His Son, who gives in turn the Father's life to the world.

It is customary, no doubt, for us to connect the Personality of God and His Fatherhood together. But, in truth, we can only grasp the idea of personality in the preceding fact of life, and then

discern this Personality as manifesting itself as 'Our Father.' Jesus emphasises the fact that His God is also Father to us and to all. So far, His Personality is known to us. But there is something in His phrase 'My God and your God' which as a Personality is not covered by His expression 'And My Father and your Father.' The latter alone connotes for the human intelligence the laying down of life in another personality, with all that life extends to; and this, it is clear, Nature also does to the fullest terms of life. Therefore, also, it is not necessary to think personality when we think Nature as 'The Father,' although for all practical purposes of thought and worship it may be exceedingly helpful to do so. Jesus always encourages this course, and in the interests of the human mind it is perhaps not wise to ignore it.

Again, the only two things known to us which rise above all obligation are the 'Father' of Jesus and 'Nature.' And in this very fact there is a hint of their identity. Kant pointed out that Nature does not move to the compulsions of an imperative. 'Indeed, the "Ought,"' he observes, 'when we consider merely the course of Nature, has neither application nor meaning. The question, what ought to happen in the sphere of Nature is just as absurd as the question what ought to be the properties of a circle. All that we are entitled to ask is, what takes place in Nature, or, in the latter case, what *are* the properties of a circle?'

Now, this is the very place given to the Father

by Jesus. He is not under the compulsion of the imperative 'I ought.' Jesus attentively regards the works of the Father, but He sees no obligation behind them. 'Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Thy sight,' explains the motive of their creation. He makes the Father's example in this respect the reason for urging all men to follow Him. Every action should spring from a good will, and not merely from the compulsion of an 'I ought.' Jesus Himself notes in all around Him what the Father does, and has worked 'hitherto,' and then makes it His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work (John iv. 34).

In this respect, once more, there is an identity in the character of Nature with the character of the Father. No imperative lies behind either. Yet it lies behind all else, and instinctively our consciousness of the unity of Being, and of an absolute Imperative behind all things, inclines us to see in these Dualities the One whom Jesus has revealed as 'Our Father.' In a similar way, it might be shown, as Bacon pointed out, that human thought cannot control Nature any more than it can control God, and as Jesus puts all thought under the claim of the Father, there is a natural prepossession to believe that in 'Nature' we are dealing with the same Being.

Moreover, the Test of character in God or Man, which Jesus formulates as an absolute, is precisely the same which governs Nature. 'By their fruits ye shall know them.' The test of the kind of life or character of all things in the natural world

is by its fruits. The apple gives nature and character to the apple tree, and distinguishes it from all other trees. Now, the Divine Nature and character are not known to us in any other way, nor yet is human nature. If we assume these to be revealed to us in any other manner, or tested by any other criterion, error is sure to follow. *The facts of the fruit come before the facts of doctrine.* And thus far the facts of what Nature bears, and of what the Father has brought forth, lead up to an identity.

An example or two should make this evident. 'Die to live' is a principle quite peculiar to Jesus, and perhaps His greatest for Ethics and Theology. Yet He Himself found it in Nature. *It was in her character and work before it was on His lips.* 'Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a grain of wheat fall into the earth and die, it abideth by itself alone, but if it die, it beareth much fruit' (John xii. 24). From which He deduces His great doctrine, 'He that loveth his life loseth it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal.' Here, Nature, and man as part of her, are seen surrendering life, and in life, personality, with the result of much fruit being brought forth in the new life and in the new personality. This is exactly what Jesus represents the Father to have done. He alone had life in Himself, and He gave to the Son to have life in Himself, and so also gave the Father's personality, surrendered in His life; and in turn Jesus surrenders all He is, and that not merely at Calvary, but all through His life, in order that all men

might have the Father-life and Father-personality given to them also. Neither Nature nor the Father is careful to preserve the personality, but only the life. All grows out of this subsequently, as 'much fruit.' For even personality is a fruit of life.

But Jesus nowhere says that He receives anything from Nature. He declares 'My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me.' When we should reasonably infer that Nature's teaching was in His mind when speaking of the grain of wheat, He astonishes us by saying it is the teaching of the Father!

Again, the Father keeps nothing back, 'All things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine.' He can also say like the prodigal's father, 'Son, *all* that I have is thine.' Can we say less of Nature? She gives *all* to the other. The history of the world is the record of the unfolding of her treasures. 'The whole heart of Nature seems thirsting to give, and still to give,' says Ruskin. Jesus and Nature can alone be compared in this respect. The principle, though possible to all, comes to its fullest fruit alone in Jesus and Nature. For what does Nature retain for her own exclusive use and gratification? Is not all given up? What wealth and abundance are lavished from her hand, without stint, without one iota kept back! In our rudeness we say, 'Oh, Nature cannot help growing things, and yielding up her immense treasures to man.' Jesus, however, saw the Father's full hand in all the works of Nature, but He never said, and He never

thought, 'Nature.' He said, and He thought, 'Father.' What we blindly gaze upon as 'Nature' was to Him a vision of the Father. He was under no necessity, as we now are, alas, to construct an identity out of the two objectives, God *and* Nature. Our 'Nature,' simply, had no existence in His thoughts. He knew but One only, the living Father of All. He knew man, the tree, the vine, the raven, the sheep, the sea, the mountain, and the individuals in 'Nature,' but the TOTAL of which these are but parts He did not know as 'Nature,' but as 'The Father.'

'Be not anxious for your life, what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink;' 'Be not, therefore, anxious for the morrow,' are precepts which Jesus finds normal in Nature, and urges a calm mind regarding both questions of the food and the future; for as the birds have all their wants supplied without sowing or reaping, and man obtains stature independent of any thought, it is evident some all-embracing provider must affectionately care for both. 'Be not anxious, therefore.' But, again, Jesus does not see an Impersonal 'Nature' as their provider. He sees the Personal Father only in these things. Man and bird in the matters of food and growth,—and these surely are in the hands of 'Nature,'—have *the Father*, as Jesus views the matter, as sole Giver of every gift. Where we see 'Nature,' once more, Jesus sees the 'Father.'

We have tried to show that Jesus and Nature agree to place the greatest weight on Life. In each system, 'kingdom' and 'doctrine,' 'religion'

and 'morality,' with all which these imply, take a subordinate place, by comparison. *To give life* is the avowed purpose of Jesus in coming into the world, and life as a primary impulse in Nature seems attested by all her motions.

We venture to think that in the deep passion of Love, Jesus and Nature are no less united. The evidences, no doubt, are obscurer in the one than in the other, but the parallel, if we are allowed such, merges nearer to identity if we are careful to remember that all maternal love in the human and animal realms must be claimed for 'Nature.' It is astonishing how Jesus identifies His own love, even when it is poured forth in fullest measure, and on occasions calling for its intensest expression, with the maternal love of 'Nature,' as illustrated by the lowliest creatures. At first sight, it seems a far distance between the love of such a heart as His for Jerusalem, and the love of the hen for her young, but His words 'How often would I have gathered thy children together, *even as a hen* her own brood under her wings,' mean more than a rhetorical parallel. 'Even as a hen' is a standard of yearning affection which He was conscious He Himself could not surpass. The despised fowl and the divine Jesus so merge in this one eternal passion. His great Commandment, therefore, 'Love one another as I have loved you,' is not degraded in the smallest, if, with a clear mind, we paraphrase it 'Love one another as the hen loves her own brood.'

There is not the least doubt that the animal creation gives as genuine proofs of love for

'another' as Jesus has done for man. The difference is that His love has ourselves for its object, and the other has not. And, in the sphere of emotion, when we do not identify an affection as for ourselves, it is easy to believe that it has no existence at all. To die, to give up life for the other, is exemplified every day among the animal species. To endure torture meekly, to suffer abuse and retaliate not, to wear out life in unrequited service for others, is being done every day all around us.

It is, however, when we rise above the narrow horizons of both man and animal, to a general comprehension of the Universe, that we behold the power of love in Nature on the grand scale. Why does all 'hang together?' as Carlyle puts it. What mean the laws of cohesion and of gravitation? If we follow Jesus in His deduction that the stones were in sympathy, not rhetorically, but actually, with the crowd that rendered Him homage, we are bound to see in the universal convergence of each object in Nature to all, and of all to each, not a mere mechanical and fortuitous bewilderment of excited accidentalities, but the magnificent display of the same sublime passion of brooding communion which drew Saint John to the bosom of Jesus; and which yet and forever is in such intense action throughout the world, drawing all men unto Him. There seems to be no dubiety in any intelligent mind regarding the declared tendency to unity throughout all Creation. But the same motion surges in the bosom of Jesus, 'That they all may be one.'

Universal Force is not more united in its motions in creation than Universal Love makes for communion in man; and that Universal Force and Universal Love should find their ultimate in the Person of the Father, is no more irrational and unthinkable than that Jesus should find the same sympathy of the stone in the human soul, and the same animal affection for the young brood in His own love for humanity. The passion of Love which emerges from the human bosom touches every object in the Universe at every point, and as it flows first out of personality, so in Personality it finds its final rest in the heart of the Father. The Father and 'Nature' are One.

Jesus' idea of the perfection of Beauty is also drawn from Nature. 'Consider the lilies of the field.' Human art and adornment cannot array a Solomon with such glory. It is Nature's glory. It is also the glory of the Father. The two are one, or we must assume that there are two sources of the same perfection.

The identity of 'Nature' with the 'Father' of Jesus seems also to give us the true perspective of thought for what is frequently denominated the 'miraculous.' Theologians have professed to see the 'Will' of God in 'Nature,' and scientists have declared as strenuously for 'Law.' Jesus has no acknowledgment of either. He only discerns a Person, His Father.

To approach the subject of the miraculous with a presupposition in our minds that a 'Law' exists in Nature, or that a 'Will' is operative in that

realm apart from a Personality, is to ignore the standpoint of Jesus. This, doubtless, was the attitude taken up by the Jews. They sought after a 'Sign.' In modern language, they desired Jesus to 'violate' natural law. They had no personality in their conception of Nature. Jesus was expected to juggle with certain forces, and this is sometimes assumed in the modern mind to amount to working 'miracles!' When the Jews thought of God as giving a 'sign,' they conceived Him as 'standing up' to certain forces or powers, and glorifying Himself by wrestling with them and overcoming them! Jesus separated Himself from the Jewish notion, by declaring that no sign would be given them. He maintains that what He does in healing the sick, in casting out demons, and in raising the dead, is neither in correlation nor in contention with impersonal forces, or 'laws' of Nature, but in direct solicitation and sympathy with a Person. These are 'the works' of the Father. They are neither 'signs' nor 'miracles.' He closes the two ideas of God and Nature in one Person, the Father, and sees Himself as simply doing *the ordinary works of a father*, and out of a father's affections.

Nowhere does He ever seem conscious of altering, infringing or tampering in any way with a 'law of Nature.' But He asks a Person to bestow health and comfort upon the sick, and to give life to the dead. In raising Lazarus, for example (assuming the historicity of the account), He says, 'Father, I thank Thee that Thou heardest Me' (John xi. 41). There is a Person

there, and because the Person is there, the Law is there. A 'law' or 'will' can only be there because the Father is there. Where all saw a power, and where moderns see a 'will,' or 'law,' He saw a Person.

It is the conception of a Personality as being present and active in His works which disrobes them of our conception of the 'miraculous.' The conception of this person as 'Father' brings with it again the conception of possible infinity, and it is infinity which solves all problems and renders them 'natural.' To mankind, 'Nature' is a conception with horizons. It is a system, and has no necessary connection with personality. It is conceived to be a mass, a development, a deposit, a phenomenon. Jesus grasped the stupendous sum of The All, and said, 'Father.' This was His equation of our 'Nature.' Therefore, that which is the 'miraculous' to us was the purely natural or ordinary to Him. The Father had always given life to all. Why should not He yet give life? Could a Father better vindicate His natural affection for the children of His own begetting? 'The works which the Father hath given Me to accomplish, the very works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me' (John v. 36).

It is in Nature also that Jesus finds His strongest illustration of the Father's forgiveness, and love for the worst. The sun rises on the evil and the good, and the rain is sent on the just and the unjust. We proclaim this as an act of a dead, mechanical, impersonal 'Nature!' Jesus declares

it to be the act of the Father who is in heaven; that is, He identifies His Father with our 'Nature' as *one Cause* (Matt. v. 44-48). He also adduces these acts of Nature as enforcing His teaching, 'Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you.' The sun and rain are likewise a Father's gift of love, and are not derived from His judgment as to what His creatures merit on account of what they have done. Jesus sees not only forgiveness in the sun and rain, but the love that gives new life; and He urges men to do accordingly, 'For if ye love them that love you, what reward have ye?'

Doubtless, it is in much dispute whether or not moral judgment can be attributed to 'Nature.' In our humble opinion, it is impossible to do so while we regard Nature as a dead, inert, impersonal thing. The whole of our argument is, of course, to the contrary. Following the teaching of Jesus, we believe the 'Nature' of the poets, and of universal Literature, to be a pure creation of the human mind, and to have no existence in fact. Nature, to Jesus, is as much spirit as matter, just as, to us, man is as much soul as body. And consequently Jesus discerns all the 'moralities' there are, to be as dominant in 'Nature' as they are seen to be in humanity. At the same time, just as Jesus severed Himself and His teaching from the 'moralities' of His age, so also it may be necessary for us to distinguish strongly between the basis of morality as found in our positive systems, and that basis on which, deeper and more permanent, all Nature moves. Nature, like Jesus,

makes Life the fundamental, and as 'eternal' as possible. Man works his 'morals' to gain some ideal perfection, and changes his ideal with every century. Jesus assures us *that the way Nature acts is the true moral law to man, and the way not only to perfection, but to be like the Father.* 'Pattern your actions after the model set you in the sun and rain, and you will be perfect even as the Father is perfect' (Matt. v. 44-48).

This high standard of action in Nature, unsurpassable by man, has extorted the enthusiasm of all ages. To know the truly natural way either of body, mind, or spirit, is to know the truly right way. Poets, philosophers, and scientists have vied with each other in saying every word about Nature that the theologians have said about God. Jesus has given to the world nothing either in principle or practice which is lacking in Nature, if we retain man within the scope of that term. He Himself is always seen at His best when clothed in her raiment. 'I am the Light of the world,' 'I am the Life,' 'I am the Vine,' 'I am the Bread of life,' 'I, the Son of Man.' These are the brightest gems in His crown, and they are all borrowed from Nature.

It seems, therefore, as inconsistent to deny the passion of love to Nature as to deny to her the principle of life. As far as life is manifest throughout her vast domains, the same power which we name love attends it, environs it, and inspires it, grows with it, and departs with it, under the varying forms named of instinct, desire, appetite, or, at lowest, of Hunger. And, if love

is there, forgiveness is there. Indeed, Jesus' teaching that 'the Father judgeth no man,' comes alongside of this view of Nature with startling directness. If it is so with the Father, it must be so with Nature. Carlyle has expressed it in these terms: 'You take wheat to cast into the earth's bosom; your wheat may be mixed with chaff, chopped straw, barn-sweepings, dust and all imaginable rubbish; no matter; you cast it into the kind just Earth; she grows the wheat—the whole rubbish she silently absorbs, shrouds it in; says nothing of the rubbish. The yellow wheat is growing there, the good Earth is silent about all the rest,—has silently turned all the rest to some benefit too, and makes no complaint about it!' (*Heroes*, Lect. II.).

She is, in her character of Life-Giver, that is, Father, the all-forgiving One. We can discover no intention to punish in Nature. Effect consorts with cause, but there is no vindictiveness. Perhaps no man on earth has ever developed a consciousness that Nature lying beyond the human sphere had a record of judgment laid up in store for him, on account of his sins against her. On the contrary, the best minds and the purest hearts instinctively cling to Nature as the true oblivion for remorse, the healer of deepest wounds, and the best guide to future well-being. 'The more we know of Nature and of history,' says Dr. Percy Gardner, 'the better able are we to choose the better and decline the worse.' But Life, and not morality, as we understand it, is her objective in all her motions. Like Jesus, her grand purpose

in existence is not to create people who are blameless in character, but those who are perfect in life. All our 'moralities' for most part will stay with us in the tomb, but to have eternal life is to draw upon a source of Being which is far removed from realms where 'sins' are known. Not a clean slate, but a new life, a birth, is the first desideratum of both Nature and Jesus. And in this, once more, we behold the face of 'the Father who is in heaven.'

Nothing is so remarkable, perhaps, as the method of Jesus in leading men to the Father. It is perpetually by Nature that He does so. He stands on the facts of Nature. Here and there He draws an arrow from the pharetra of the Old Testament, when He finds that it is the only weapon likely to be effective, but Nature is His first and final resort, and it is there He lays His deep foundations on the rock of Life, the Child being its highest representative on the earth, and the Father its crowning Excellence in Heaven. Take, for example, His teaching on such important subjects as Marriage, the Sabbath, and Prayer. He vindicates for these in the sphere of human life an authority which is based wholly on Nature.

It is, however, necessary to remind ourselves in discussing these themes that no human system of society on the earth in these days professes to realize in its practices the scheme of social relationship, either as between man and man, or as between man and God, which Jesus has asked the world to follow. And the reason is found in the universal

lack of adherence to the principles and practices of Nature on which He grounds His doctrines. Human Life at present, from the cradle to the grave, is one huge congeries of irrationalities, conventionalities, caste, laws of panic invention, governments born of despair, policies of the mob, all maintaining their 'righteousness' under the moral sanction of scattered and dissident ecclesiastical bodies which themselves assert their 'infallibility' because of their divine origin in Reformers, the Fathers, the great Councils, and the Apostles. The world, we think, can only find true centrality, for its systems of Church and State, by following Jesus, and so reaching Nature and a natural life through Him.

Prayer, with Jesus, is never a duty, and still less is it a discipline. It is as natural to the spirit of man as the use of eye or ear is to his body. It does not obtain its sanction from a 'command,' or its efficacy from a priest. It is a hunger of life; the cry of a life: a life which is drawn from the Father. And on that natural basis Jesus leaves it. 'What man is there of you, who, if his son shall ask for a loaf, will give him a stone, or if he shall ask for a fish, will give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?'

Jesus also puts the 'commands' of Nature above the command to obey the Sabbath of the Jews. He does not allow the claim of the Jewish institution to have either divine or universal validity. It may

or may not be true that the Sabbath was based on the example of God's Rest after His creative exertions (Exodus xx. 2), or upon the occasion of the Exodus from Egypt (Deut. v. 15). But Jesus nowhere respects such authorities, and calmly dethrones them to exalt in their room the higher interests of healing and hunger. The interests of life, in short, or, stating it universally, the interests of Nature, are alone esteemed by Him as the true imperative for human conduct. If the interests of the Sabbath intervene between man and the interests of his nature, the Sabbath must give way. Nature is nearer divinity than Priesthoods and Churches. Any son of man, as well as the Only Son, is lord of this Sabbath day. The Jewish Sabbath, however beneficial it may be as a social institution, rests on positive, not on natural, that is, Divine Law. And perhaps we are correct in saying that the Christian Sabbath rests on neither, but on that veneration of the human soul for the object of its love, marking a dear memory so by such a notch on Time—a memory which comes to us hallowed by its antiquity, and the custom originated by the First Christians.

Our view of Jesus' teaching on Marriage will seem, we are aware, of a harsher and more unpalatable nature. We are led directly to it by the conviction that Jesus consistently, and always, breaks through the concrete of positive law, to base His doctrines on the laws of Nature. What is not natural is, to Him, not true. We cannot, of course, trace here the history of the marriage institution, but it may be sufficient to say that its

foundations are no deeper than that of Sex. Marriage, as sacred, as fraught with the profoundest results to the race, and as one of the paths to be pursued in human progression towards perfected humanity, is yet subordinate to the fact of Sex, and Jesus bases the sanctity of it, not in its admitted advantages to a civilized and purified humanity, nor in any celestial command to be regulated and supervised on earth by either prince or priest, but wholly in the impulses of life, sacred from the Life of the Father, and on that account supreme in that highest authority which sets all other imperatives aside, even the dearest, in order to consummate Life's, that is, Nature's consecrations. 'From the beginning of the creation, Male and Female made He them. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the twain shall become one flesh, so that they are no more twain, but one flesh. What, therefore, God hath joined together, let not man put asunder' (Mark x. 6-9).

Marriage, here, stands on truly divine levels, and these are also, beyond cavil, truly natural ones. The foundations of Marriage are divine because they are natural, but whereas Jesus shows that the Holy Presence of God is nowhere so transparently present and evident in the affairs of men as in the coming of the new personality to the world, man, as a rule, sees only 'Nature' here under her strongest passion. Jesus sees the presence of God, but does *not* see 'Nature.' 'Nature,' indeed, vanishes from these high altitudes, and, here, as in the beginning, we stand alone with Eternal Love,

the Holy Father and the children whom He hath begotten, and the power of His Life as going forth from eternity unto eternity swaddled in all its strange mystery and wonder.

Christianity is founded in Judaism, we are frequently informed. And we as frequently fail to see the truth of such an assertion, except in so far as Judaism is based in Nature. For Jesus departs not by a hair-breadth from the path of Nature, and His divergence from Judaism is perhaps nowhere so clearly emphasised as in this teaching on marriage. That Sex-relationship should be associated with the entrance of sin into the world, instead of the child, and that the frown and curse of God should descend upon the male and the female because of their commingling of life, and also that every symptom of sexuality should be branded as unclean and unholy, stamps Judaism as immeasurably removed from the truth of creational purpose, the purity of human love, the sacredness of procreation, and that discernment of gladness in God's presence, which are all so impressively evident to Jesus in His view of the intercourse of the sexes. The story of Eden is as much a slander on the presence of God in the newly born babe as the accusation that Jesus was the prince of devils was a slander on the presence of the Father in the Son whom He had begotten and sent into the world.

Christianity is founded in the deep facts of life and Nature, and owes nothing to unhallowed and ignorant conceptions of God's ways of life. But, undoubtedly, mankind has a far road to

travel before it can emerge from the malarial mists which have so long enshrouded sex-relationship, and can stand in that pure atmosphere of love and life in which Jesus envelops it. Yet the function of giving life to the world which our Lord Himself makes His own, and declares to be the reason for the express presence of God in the procreation of the new personality, is as natural to the loves of the bees and the birds as it is to the best instincts of the purest hearts. Everything depends on what we bring to this subject in our minds. If we throw human features into a heavenly mirror we shall see the seraph in the human form, but marriage has usually been viewed as a reflection from the flames of a sordid fire, and so the Presence which Jesus saw there has appeared to men as an insatiable monster of lust, and the face of natural love as fit only to be hidden under veils and dark metaphors. Each person carries with him his potter's wheel, and grinds and pounds the celestial spirits to the gross image of his own earthy model.

Nevertheless, it is God, or as we profanely say, Nature, that joins. It is man that puts asunder. The natural is the divine, but man, represented by Moses perhaps, interferes because of 'hardness of heart' (Mark x. 5), in the way that all positive law must do under present conditions of human development. Jesus authenticates only the divine marriage law, the natural, and leaves Moses' and all positive laws of marriage to the corrections of coming time.

We have given these three subjects, Prayer, the Sabbath, and Marriage, as illustrations of Jesus' method in leading men to the Father through what we call 'Nature.' But it is possible to show that in every case, when treating of personalities, principles, or practices, He constantly substitutes His 'Father' for our 'Nature.' He always takes His stand on natural fact, and especially on facts that connote life. Jesus traces His Golden Rule (Matt. vii. 12) and His New Commandment (John xiii. 34) to no higher source than Nature in Man.

Perhaps nothing in the teaching of Jesus coincides with Nature so profoundly as His doctrine of Death. How small a portion of His system, or of His thoughts, death seems to occupy when contrasted with its preponderance in the fears of humanity, and the importance assigned to it in all religions! Life is His grand fact, Death but a shadow. When He comes to die, He does not think of 'death,' but of the Father. We lament, we say, 'I am going to die.' He said, 'I go to the Father.' He upbraids His disciples because they are cast down at such a prospect, and says, 'If ye loved Me ye would rejoice, because I go to the Father.' He puts the personality of the Father, or of Himself, in the place of death. 'I will come again and receive you.' Where man sees death, Jesus speaks out of it and says 'It is I.' He is Life, and therefore, also, Death, or, the going away of Life. He does not inculcate readiness for '*death*' as one of our duties, but He does say 'Be ye also ready, for in an hour

that ye think not the *Son of man* cometh ' (Matt. xxiv. 44). He comes, but not 'death.' And for the same reason, in 'death' we meet life, for He is the Life, and, consequently, the 'Resurrection' also from this life to the heavenly. 'Though he die, yet shall he live' (John xi. 25).

Now the same phenomenon is apparent in Nature. There is no provision made for death, or any readiness assumed to meet it. The seed, the new-born of every name, sets forth on the path of life as for an endless journey. Indeed, this assumption of an eternal existence is perhaps the most deeply rooted thing in all creatures, whether we call it a consciousness in man, a law in Nature, or an instinct in animals. 'Nature,' certainly, seems as confident of everlasting existence as Jesus is. The flower grows, the bird builds, and the animal acts with an earnestness and fearlessness that speak of a purpose of life so boundless as to have no hint or shadow of annihilation in it. Neither can the human mind, in its highest flights, approach to the faintest apprehension that matter, or Nature, once was not, and again shall cease to be. Everlastingness is confessed by all things, and the episodes of change which affect electrons, atoms, molecules, stones, germs, beasts, or human beings, are accepted as mere waves in the shoreless ocean of Being. A fixed stop in existence, a gap, or verge where all being ends, is not acknowledged by either Nature or man, either through instinct or consciousness.

Hence, there are no symptoms of *doubting* in

'Nature.' Her 'faith' is all Jesus saw it to be, as exemplified in the trust shown by the raven, the lilies, the grass, the abashed wind, and the obedient sea: and there is no doubt that the great 'faith' of Jesus in the Father, and that exhibited by Nature, are not merely correspondences, but identities, and rest on one common foundation. This can only mean the presence in all things of a Principle which is itself both unconscious and incapable of perishing. The faith so full in both Jesus and Nature, so identical in every respect, closes in a unity which cannot itself be an Impersonality. That is to say, neither Jesus nor Nature acknowledges death to be an absolute thing. Only Life is so acknowledged. For this reason, both preserve an unruffled equilibrium in the presence of death. Both breathe a strenuous purpose to live, to go forward fearlessly, to finish 'the work' given them to do, but to 'die' is not an expectation of ceasing to be, which is inherent in existence, natural or human. Nature puts death aside in the same way that Jesus does, viz. by an invariable substitution of the fact and thought of life in its place.

Endless existence, therefore, seems a fixed acceptance in all created being. Nay, to have such, appears to be the universal desire. But it is not so with regard to *change*. All change must be effected by superior force. No object, individuality, or personality, will consent to constitutional change except under the severest compulsions. Nothing in the Universe, be it element or man, consents willingly to be resolved into another form

or mode of being. Overcoming power must be employed to accomplish this. And we venture to think that it is this same desire of endless existence which begets the resistance. Everything desires to remain intact in its individuality, as it finds itself in the present. Change, or 'death,' begets fear of annihilation of personality. And whether the seed falls into the ground, or remains alone, or falls into the fire, *the sacrifice of personality* must be carried out by a higher power.

It is, consequently, of the last importance to the human outlook on the Hereafter, to be assured that this Power which compels the death-change is Itself all we understand a Personality to be, and does, in every case, 'come again' to work such change conform to Its own being and nature. The true guarantee, therefore, of what all shall be in the great future, lies not in mere promises, and sanguine hopes, but in the character of that unchanging Life-Source out of which all things were begotten 'in the beginning.' 'Because I live, ye shall live also.' His purpose must always be not that we shall be less than we have been, but forever more and more. But necessarily, in this eternal ascent 'to the Father,' there must be many abiding, or, resting places ('mansions,' John xiv. 2), and this earth is only one of them. The 'Father's House' is full of them, and Jesus goes ever before to prepare them for man. The 'heaven' of our praises, then, should not be regarded as the whole of the 'Father's House,' but only the next 'abiding place' to the one in which we now find ourselves resting.

Jesus, at His departure, is anxious to impress this upon His disciples. It can be done of course through their Faith only. Hence He asks them to transfer the great faith they had in the God of their fathers to Himself and to His Father. 'Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God (Yahwé), believe also in Me. In My Father's House are many mansions (abiding places); if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you' (John xiv. 1-3).

There is, indeed, in all Nature a bottomless passion to live forever which is in perfect consonance with that vision of eternal life held out to mortals by our Saviour; but personality, or, as in Nature, individuality, or entity, is such a precious possession that all hesitate to lose it once more, even in God, on the bare faith that He will give in the process of change or 'death' a far better, fuller, and higher one.

Now, *it is this surrender of fixed unity of being, considered as an absolute eternal permanence*, that is being unceasingly urged by the atoms from the electrons, by the bacteria from matter, by the plant from bacteria, by animals from plants, by man from all below him in creation, and, by the life and personality he will be, from the life and personality he now is. We should note that even Jesus yielded before this changing force in bowing to the will of His Father in the Garden.

Nature corroborates this teaching of Jesus, and is at one with Him in fact and principle. 'Death,' in all below the human sphere, is an actual raising of life to a higher plane through sacrifice of

personality, or fixed unity of being. So also on the human plane, the smaller, narrower, lower individuality, or personality, finds all it was, in a wider, higher, and more exalted unit, one power of life nearer to that Life which is the Unit uniting all units, viz. God. Jesus said, 'I ascend unto My Father and your Father, and My God and your God' (John xx. 17). His personality even after death was still on the ascending path; the same, yet not the same to any one who knew Him previous to crucifixion: the same, yet no more the same, than the corn of wheat growing in the field to-day is the identical individual seed which fell into the ground and died in spring-time.

As regards the life above us, we are all moving into the vestibule of the new being, or personality we shall be, even as we did before we entered into this present life. But '*everlasting life*,' not eternalization of our present *personality* which rests on life, is alone assured to us in Jesus' teaching. Yet, we may infer that when life is so assured, something answering to our present personality will be assured with such life.

The truth of the RESURRECTION is also contained in this ascent of all things to the Father and to God. Personality, individuality, finality and fixity of the unit of present life, is surrendered and laid down in the new form of being, and there is resurrection into the personality or new form of life prepared for it. For, perhaps, nothing is so clear in the prolonged processes of life, as far as experience can verify them, as that Fatherhood, or

the father-principle, goes ever before 'to prepare,' as Jesus puts it, the place for the one to come. 'I go to prepare a place for you' is as true in Nature, where all sentient and even unsentient things provide for the new-birth, as it is in the sphere of humanity, where love goes hand in hand, with the life laid down in the child, to prepare for it a 'place.' That is to say, the universal force controlling all change in death, is at bottom, the force of a Father-Love.

And we venture to believe that it is just this father-principle going before all life, and under the power of which all life is ascending, which explains the identity of the two objectives, the 'Father' of Jesus, and our 'Nature.' The procreation of the child, or new personality, is, as we see and as we say, the work of 'Nature.' The universal assumption of endless existence is also hers, and perpetual ascent of life is written on every page of her history. 'Death,' or 'laying down life' to 'take it again' in expanded unity of being, is also her declared process of ascent or resurrection, towards a Goal of perfected life which she has best defined by a Man Who Himself declares that this Goal is the Father. But as life is, with all its processes, the best proof that a Father is, and that there is no other behind all the phenomena of life, therefore we are driven to conclude that this vast system of life which we call 'Nature' is not impersonal, but the 'Father' of Jesus' doctrine.

The analogy between Jesus' teaching and that of Nature might be carried far. For, indeed, all

that we know by Nature increasingly tends to enlarge that scope of verification of truth which we find identical with the truths taught by Jesus. Sir John Seeley pointed out that even Faith itself is not a Christian virtue, yet Jesus demanded it first of all things from His followers. It was the most natural motion of the soul. No two things known to man can so fully harmonize their testimony as can Jesus and Nature in the assertion, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.' When men come to Jesus they find that they have come to the same truths, the same principles, the same life which are enforced and inculcated in 'Nature.' And no man cometh to the Father but by Him.

How discordantly all other systems compare with these Two! In Philosophy, History, Poetry, Religion: in all bodies of Law, and in all Literatures generally, how infinite is the labour expended on them, what revolutions transpire in the process of adjusting and readjusting them again and again to a standard of life and truth! 'Nature,' like a rock, calmly remains the same while these foaming waves go round her. The same phenomena are observable with regard to Jesus and the movements that flow around Him in the Church and in the World. His character and Message survive the changes wrought by the great forces of human thought and learning. The Creeds formulated in His name, the doctrines propounded as by His authority, the systems of Church government and of Worship which profess the divine sanction of His personal imprimatur,

are all excised, amended, and recreated as the Mind of man changes with the ages. Everything, and everyone, becomes false, sooner or later, save Jesus and Nature.

Are they, then, separate sources of life and truth, or only the Twin breasts of the one Father's bosom, whence all creation feeds and nourishes itself? In high sincerity, only these Two have realized that true communion which is fulfilled alone in the giving of life, the communion of Father and Child. Yet when it is accomplished, all instinctively feel that such a consummation is also most in harmony with what we understand as 'Nature.'

Again, Jesus seems to turn intuitively to the two things most naturally associated with life, viz. the Bread and Wine of external nature, when He would symbolize in Himself, for all time, the heavenly and earthly Communion, the externalisation of all divine and human sympathies and satisfactions experienced by men. Among the myriads of objects, also, which men in the world's history have been able to contemplate, Jesus and 'Nature' are the solitary Two which have been beheld as without 'Sin.' Only these Two, also, men have been able to judge as manifesting in living, practical fact, a faultless revelation of the Eternal.

These and other considerations lead us directly to the conviction, to justify which these two chapters have been devoted, that *Jesus found the grand pattern of His moral life, not as originating in Himself, but already and through all past time*

open and in intense action in the Father's working-Life in 'Nature,' and in history. What Hegel said of Art seems as true of Nature, 'It is the divine made visible.' In the human personality of Jesus it comes to the self-consciousness of being the Divine Father.

For in all fundamentals, Nature, as we term it, gives eyes to the blind, as well as Jesus, and with no assumption on her part of working a 'miracle' any more than He had. Every time that a foetus opens its eyes on this world, this 'miracle' of the blind receiving sight is accomplished to the full. In like manner, the lame walk, the deaf hear, and the 'dead' are raised. But Jesus at no time would have His works regarded as 'wonders' or 'signs.' They were simply the 'works of the Father,' and perfectly natural, and in complete harmony with all a Father's ways. If Jesus had said, 'Nature worketh hitherto, and I work,' He would have stated an absolute truth, but as 'Nature' had no existence for Him, and is a mere figment of the fancy, He could only say 'My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.'

It is here also, perhaps, that we find the reason for His indifference to writings as means of perpetuating His principles. They required no writing, and their perpetuation was as assured as the universe itself. They were already written across the whole heavens and over all the earth, and in man and beast.

True religion, indeed, never yet rested finally on any book, speech, or written thought of man, or

on any externals of any shape or form, although all these are abundantly helpful to it. The 'foundations of religion' are far more safely laid. Religion existed before Bibles and churches and priests. For, as has been said, religion is the imperishable relationship which is established between the soul and the Eternal Father in His begetting of our personality, and has as little to do with Scriptures, sacred or profane, as a child's birth has with the registrar's schedule. Facts exist before the records of them, and Bibles, Korans, and Rigvedas and similar sacred repositories are simply records, most helpful, indeed, as all history must ever be, yet no more concerned with the path of the soul on its eternal way than is the record of previous log-books with the present voyage of a ship.

Every man's religion is for him a new religion, as his life is a new life, and his experience is his own and no other man's. To peril our souls on the infallibility of what has been said or done in the past is to profane the presence, here and now, of the Eternal, and the life and love He gives here, in this day and hour, as truly as at any period in the existence of the world. For, indeed, what is found written in books can only declare what were the particular conceptions of God, and man's attitude towards Him, at the given time of writing. But life and thought, instinct and consciousness, are ever expanding and quickening, and are moving slowly onwards to changes which throw these by-past conceptions of God entirely out of focus; and in the lapse of centuries the

vision of truth, beheld once as true, becomes no longer true.

Jesus wrote nothing. He gave no command to write. He authorizes no writings we possess. Truth written is truth crystallized, and, so far, is truth preserved. But the truth, as Jesus knew it, was to live on into all human developments forever, and hence He committed His conception of God not to books, but to the soil of human nature, and left it to grow there with its growth and strengthen with its strength, being assured that so long as hearts loved and time increased, it must vitalize the one and command the other. He stood upon facts that do not change with time, and do not wear with thinking them. The Father gave the Son to have *His* life. His life in Jesus was then life and light to the world. It was also flame, as the world soon discovered; the flame of Love flashing from the motions of Life. For the celestial fire from heaven kindled the hearts of men, and the floods of death could not extinguish it. The conflagration of love and faith in Him, spread from soul to soul, from life to life, from country to country, and as it did so without the necessity of books, were every book on the earth buried in the sea to-day, this conflagration would still prevail against the gates of Hades. Is it not the natural way of such conflagrations? They have a longer life than that of books.

But there are many good souls who conceive and assert that if we had not possessed a New Testament we should never have had Christianity! We shall be the last to disparage any Testament, New

or Old, but they forget that Nature all around us, and human nature within us, are ever the same great reservoirs of truth now, as they have always been. Not a prophet; not a priest; not a high soaring soul of any kind, in any age, has ever added anything new to the sum of things lodged there. Even Jesus added nothing: only revealing what was there already. He claimed to inaugurate nothing. He could do nothing of Himself. Only the Father could do anything, and the Father had been working even until His day, and His part was not to create or add anything to the truth which was already stored in the deeps of Nature and the human soul, but to draw out and lead forth the pearls of great price already hidden within them.

Instead of saying that the New Testament has made and preserved Christianity, it would be nearer the truth to say that true Christianity has made and preserved the New Testament. When Jesus ceases to be lived, as men can live Him, no book will save Christianity. The same passion of love and faith which encircled the person of Jesus from the time of the first Christians was the true leavening influence in the world then, and it is the same to-day. And this can only be conveyed and continued from heart to heart, from lip to lip, from experience to experience, from living souls to living souls. Out of this passion of love and faith the New Testament itself grew, and so also what we call the Christian Church, and now, as we behold it, the Christian world.

The doctrines of Jesus at no time depend for

their existence on records, historical or otherwise, any more than upon any philosophical or metaphysical system of Thought. What is true is divine, and never can be less. His own conscious statement of His divinity was simply 'I am . . . the TRUTH.' And no truth can fail of perpetuation when it is joined to Life. He *begat* His doctrines, He did not merely *think* them (John vi. 63). He rested His system, if we may call it such, on the same rock where 'Nature' herself reposes. He founded upon life, here and now, past and future, and so Jesus and 'Nature' meet together in this same element which flows as a common flood for both out of the life of the eternal Father.

The Truth streaming out of both, if yet for convenience we must class them as dualities, is the only truth of fact possible to the understanding as a permanence, profitable to soul and body, now and forever. But if its source is double, the truth itself is one, and Jesus discerns also its well-head to be the Father. 'My teaching is not Mine, but His that sent Me.' The source is one, so that if 'Nature' has substantive being, it must be that of the Father.

The historical descent of His doctrine Jesus appears to trace very simply. 'The words that I have spoken unto you are spirit, and are life' (John vi. 63). The Father first, then from Him Spirit and Life, the stuff out of which He moulds Matter and Man, body and mind. These, that is, spirit and life, produce consciousness, and 'words,' which become His 'doctrine,' which again,

through human reasoning, passes into scientific dogma, and so into the Creeds of the Churches. There is here no place for 'Nature.' The Father is the ALL.

As a consequence, the 'Word' which Nature speaks is the 'Word' which, in the fulness of times, becomes flesh, and dwells among us. Life and Spirit are as substantive and fundamental in Jesus as they are in the Creation. Moreover, it is our living experience of both Jesus and 'Nature' that can be for us the grand test of their truth. 'If any man willeth to do His will, he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God' (John vii. 16, 17). For so it began in the experience of the Father Himself when in the immeasurable past eternity He 'died' to 'live' in His child the Universe, and established by fatherhood the communion of Love and Life in all His begotten ones. His experience then became natural 'law' to all His children, even as all Nature became His Word, as much His Revelation to the eye as to the spirit.

And as all Nature completes itself in the human child, even so of the child alone could it be said, 'Whosoever shall receive this little child in My name receiveth Me, and whosoever shall receive Me receiveth Him that sent Me' (Luke ix. 48). For by the child only do we know 'Nature' and the Father as one personality.

But if it be granted that the revelation of the Father in Nature, of which man is the culmination, became to Jesus the law of His moral life, what, it may be asked, answers in Jesus and in His

teaching of the Father to the natural convulsions of earthquake and volcano, blight and rending tempest?

As has been said, death, itself, is not an 'evil' in the teaching of Jesus. Pain and all conceivable forms of suffering are not the mere motions of Will, or Force. These flow from a Person to persons not solely because He wills it, but because He loves the persons. 'God so loves the World.' In the meaning of the Minutes, men say 'God is so cruel,' but in the meaning of the Ages, Jesus maintains that God loves. Nothing is so terrible in Nature, perhaps, as the insatiable Grave; but even the Heathen, as he gazed into it, said, 'It is the god's will.' Even he could thus 'overcome the world.' Jesus transcends this conception of suffering and death, so rude and so royal in all Nature, as things merely to be sullenly and stoically borne because it is Someone's Will. He declares it is Someone's Love. And He Himself only submitted to the Will, when He saw that it was neither Force nor Will that bears the absolute Imperative in this Universe, but the Father's Love, the Love of God. 'The cup which *My Father* hath given Me, shall I not drink it?'

Doubtless, terror-stricken men, the Hebrew prophets foremost of all, saw the 'Judgments' of the wrathful Almighty in these devouring agencies of Nature. But, it humbly seems to us, that no agency in Nature has at all approached Jesus Himself as a means and cause of suffering upon the earth. He completely beggars 'Nature' in the powers of death and sorrow which He has

brought among the sons and daughters of men. The earthquake and volcano, the withering wind and wrecking sea, cannot divide affections, nor blast a parent's love for his children. Yet this is the rending influence at work in the world-enveloping Spirit of Jesus. Hearts and homes, friends and families, nations from nations, have been rent and broken by the truth as it is in Him. 'Brother shall deliver up brother to death, and the father his child; and children shall rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death' (Matt. x. 21; xxii. 34-36).

Nothing in Nature eclipses in awfulness this havoc of society. But from 'Nature' as from Jesus, it is the same Spirit that moves forward in these cataclysms. The Spirit which we behold paramount over all is not one dealing either judgment or death, but the manifestation of the power and principle of Life. It is His doctrine of 'Dying to Live' which is illustrated in all this. The record of Jesus, of Nature, and of History, is not the story of a helpless creature tortured under a tyrant's lash, but of the joy-bringing, Nature-perfecting, God-incarnating travail of a Mother. The forces of Nature and the forces of Jesus are the same forces of the same Father, directed by Him for the same purposes of Love and Life.

In the highest as in the lowest sweep of His Ethical Code, 'Nature' is ever Jesus' fundamental testimony, from the gift of the cup of cold water to the sublime epic of fatherhood in His parable of the prodigal son. In no sense does He ever act *contrary* to Nature, even when working

‘mighty works.’ Neither does He outrun Nature. He simply walks with her; and, as we have tried to show, both manifest the same spirit, the same goodness, and the same grace and power.

Is not also His great Ideal of PERFECT LIFE simply an ideal of perfected ‘Nature’ realized in Man? His Ideal is that man should be perfect as the Father is perfect (Matt. v. 48). But this becomes to us in actual practical accomplishment a striving to realize to their fullest those passions, capacities, and possibilities which Nature has bestowed on us, and which in reality sum up in Man, Nature’s highest revelation of herself.

Finally, it is remarkable that Jesus nowhere places before mankind a lofty vision or ideal of holiness, or of righteousness; nor schemes leading on to parliaments of men, and federations of the world; nor ethereal dreams of universal peace, or universal happiness, and then solemnly from these heights dictates to human beings the rules and regulations by which these ‘Lights and Perfections’ are to be reached. He has not even made the ‘Brotherhood of Man’ an ultimate of human endeavour.

Perfection, for Him, requires no origination, nor creation on His part. It lies open, divine and beautiful, in life everywhere, in the vital cell, in the germ, in the plant, in the child, in the Son of man, Nature’s crown and glory. Neither love nor life, as Nature reveals them, can be made more perfect than they are already. But in obeying them as we see them, and in faithfully following them, we shall certainly follow Jesus,

and by doing so we may also attain to that 'moral' law of perfect life which, descending through all 'Nature,' shines so brightly in the person of Jesus as He walks in these footsteps of the Father, and, through His Person, which is Nature summed, reveals the FATHER to man.

CHAPTER IX

THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN

THE question of Sin may now seem more intelligible to us from the reasoning which we have endeavoured to set forth in the previous three chapters. Let us summarize the facts which we now require. To Jesus there is none good save God. The Being of God, therefore, can alone be the standard of good, and, consequently, of evil. But we know this Being only through Nature, and Nature fulfilled in Jesus. The life and personality of Jesus compose, therefore, the single and sole ethical standard to which human thought and action can be referred, and by that standard Sin is, or is not attributable to man. His perfected life is the Judgment Bar of Human Life, for time and eternity. For there is no absolute judgment on Sin known to Jesus. All judgment is on the plane of the contingent, and relative to Himself, the Son of Man.

Jesus regulates His own life by the working-manifestation of His Father as He beholds Him in Nature, or by the All-Person of Creation. The life of Jesus, also, is life perfected according to the life in Nature, or in accord with the life-power

moving throughout this Creational System. He is Nature come to moral self-consciousness, the true, completed natural life. And, being of life, He is thereby of a Father, and also of that heavenly Father who is creation in Person. Moreover, in so incarnating this Person, His life becomes perfected life, the divine becomes human, and stands before the eyes of all men as the Goal of all perfection.

Sin, henceforth, must be reckoned from the basis of Nature in Jesus, THE MAN, instead of, as hitherto, in the history of religion, from a supposed divine Ideal deduced from varying conceptions of the nature and character of the Eternal God, tabulated in wandering tradition, or in so-called Moral Laws. *A perfect life can alone be a perfect law of morality to any one*; for a law which has not been lived, or fulfilled in human life, is imperfect for human following; is not natural; and, consequently, is not true.

Jesus, as we have seen, appeals in all His moral deliverances to the moral 'form' of the Father as visible in creation. The Nature-Person is to Him the vision of the Father whom He follows, and whose work He lifts up and seeks to 'finish.' He makes no avowal of surprise-disclosures of some moral perfection given specially to Him. He receives no miraculous or supernatural revelations of a perfect law of life to be followed by Himself and all men. *Moral Law for man grows out of His own life, consistently, and from day to day, perfected according to the natural Life of the Father revealed to all in living Nature.*

All Nature is thus to Jesus a personality, and every object or individual in it a personality whom He addresses in the same way as He addresses men. All creation is pater-pantheistic, or an All-Father-God, the source of all life, begetting all from His own substance and out of His own being, and as incarnated in Jesus, the only medium of the Eternal and Absolute God to the human spirit. The standard of perfect life, therefore, cannot change, and is inconceivable as a mere arbitrary Will whose instability can be provoked by every whiff of human passion, and which may be elevated into benignity or depressed in anger according as man may order his puny ways.

Now, this view of the Will of God as something possible of change, and as independent of creation, and apart from human life, seems to lie at the base of most of the distractions in religion, either Ancient or Modern. 'That God's mind needed to be changed, and could be changed by gifts and sacrifices, is,' says Principal Fairbairn, 'of all the beliefs known to religion the most pernicious. Out of it has come the notion that God was harsher than man, that He loved blood and could be appeased by it, that man by satisfying His lust of death could buy from Him pardon and good will.' 'The belief is venerable—if age could authenticate any opinion this were the truest man has ever held, and it is common—if to be believed everywhere, always, and by all, make a belief true, this one could not possibly be false.' 'The notion has been incorporated in multitudes of cults, has been coarsened and refined as it has dominated

man or been subdued by him, but it has held its ground in the religions, most of all in those whose elaborate institutions, sacrificial and ceremonial, have been the proudest work of its hands' (*Philosophy of the Christian Religion*, p. 562-3).

But this same belief is the grand force behind the doctrine of the Atonement, which is imbedded in all the great Creeds of Christendom. To the vast mass of Christians the words 'Christ died for our sins' mean nothing else than this 'most pernicious' belief that God's mind could be changed, and 'appeased,' and 'satisfied.' Sin has been universally accepted as necessarily referable, ultimately as well as primarily, to the Absolute One (see Müller's and Tulloch's treatises on *Sin* as representative examples). The sin of man has been believed to have been taken up by God into His mind; and having been so received, to have influenced, or *changed* His mind and will to such a degree as to alter His entire attitude towards man, and the whole moral course of the world. Hence His wrath and curse upon sin, and the bursting up forever of that serenity of Being which He knew before the advent of Man in His creation. Hence, also, the belief in the sufferings of Jesus as a 'Lamb,' bearing away the sin of the world, and the dogma of God's forgiveness of sin, or *change of mind*, towards man, 'for Christ's sake.'

'The Christian idea reversed and undid all this,' continues Principal Fairbairn, still referring to the belief in changing God's mind. 'God it conceived as by nature merciful, immutably gracious in will,

while man was the being who needed to be changed.'

'The Christian idea' ought truly to have reversed and undone 'all this,' but that Principal Fairbairn can still hold to, and reason from the conviction that all sin has still place in, and reference to the mind of the Absolute Spirit is proof enough that something is yet to be desired in that direction. For example, the word 'merciful' as applied to God cannot be considered satisfactory. To be merciful and gracious, implies a judgment in a person's mind that mercy is required. It implies, indeed, a precedent judgment that the one who needs such mercy and gracious treatment is under condemnation. The very conception of God as being merciful and gracious connotes 'change of mind' in Him. If sin is to be referred to God at all, then He must be held as changing His mind throughout the different phases of man's state as innocent or guilty, and as pardoned or condemned. It helps us nothing in rationalizing sin to say that God is by nature merciful and gracious.

The standpoint of Jesus is the only rational one. *In His doctrine, sin has neither an ultimate nor an absolute reference to the Supreme Being whom He adores as 'My God.'* He Himself is the ultimate reference. There is no other tribunal. The Father 'hath given all judgment unto the Son.' Beyond Jesus there is no sphere of judgment. 'For neither doth the Father judge any man.' The world is to be convicted of sin by the Holy Spirit, but not by referring the world and

its sin to *God*. The Holy Spirit will convict by referring sin to Jesus. 'Of sin, because they believe not on Me' (John xvi. 9). The teaching of Jesus is consistent throughout with regard to these characterizations of the work and functions of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

Perhaps the most fundamental statement regarding sin which Jesus has made, and certainly the most revolutionary, is to be found in His declaration that THE POWER, OR AUTHORITY, WHICH FORGIVES SIN IS ON THE EARTH. It is not in Heaven. The power of forgiveness, and, as a consequence, the judgment attendant on forgiveness, is committed to man, to the Son of Man, and to every man.

Now, the universal conception of sin, in its final references, has been quite the reverse of the one just given. 'There is no power on earth to forgive sins' is a dogma which has been universally postulated, and rung like a death-knell through all the great religions of history. We believe it to have been the 'most pernicious' of the fallacies in the sin-literature of the Hebrews, and through them the most baneful in Christian theology.

In the Old Testament all sin is, ultimately, sin against the Most High God, and no pardon of sin is possible or conceivable except it descends from Him. He is conceived as appropriating every sin done on earth as sin committed against Himself. 'Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight' (Psalm li. 4). 'Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy counte-

nance' (Psalm xc. 8). Hosea, at an earlier date, takes the same view, 'And they consider not in their hearts that I remember all their wickedness; now have their own doings beset them about, they are before My face' (Hos. vii. 2). Both Moses and Abraham (Exod. xxxii. 32; Gen. xviii. 32) are represented as almost agonizing at the feet of God to obtain His 'change of mind' and pardon for men. No doubt their conception of God, in His nature, and as 'Judge of all the earth,' left them no other course. Indeed, as far as the Hebrews were able to conceive God as absolute and infinite, they seem also to have conceived sin as of infinite extension, and heinous to an infinite degree by reason of the infinite nature of the terrible God who was sinned against.

Neither was this view of sin peculiar to the Hebrews. The religious consciousness of all ages and of all peoples appears to have been pervaded by this reference of sin to the Absolute. Some have been bold enough to maintain that the very universality of such a consciousness guaranteed the validity of it as fact, and they thus make the human consciousness correspond with absolute truth. Without anticipating this question, which is attempted in chapter xi., under 'Conscience,' it may be enough to say here, in passing that, the universality of such an absolute reference for sin is perhaps due largely to the unifying tendency which pervades all human thought; and to the working of which, throughout the past, we owe, for example, the belief in One God rather than, as formerly, a belief in innumerable deities. The

consciousness of plurality of gods was a universal consciousness, but untrue nevertheless. Man has seen a god in every object in air, earth, and sky, and has been conscious of accusing voices of sinfulness from every object in creation which he has adored. And to gather up into one accusing Voice the many denouncing voices; to be conscious of one Accuser only instead of many, is a result perhaps as simple and as natural as the many unifying conclusions which have been reached in every sphere of study as well as in that of religion. But if *no* object in creation now can be believed as an accuser of man as a sinner, are we nearer to perfect truth of fact in assuming *One* absolute accuser in God than were those of old who dreaded accusations of sin from gods innumerable? Is it not a possible inference that the one genuine accuser of man is to be found alone in the ancient realm of the human heart, and that the accusation is largely due to the necessary estimation of difference which the finite and imperfect mind must make in becoming conscious of the Infinite? It is, undoubtedly, very singular that Jesus has not shown sin to stand before God for condemnation or for pardon, but has assigned all judgment to Himself, and to the decisions of *men* as the basis of that judgment (Matt. vii. 2).

A pardon of sin, originating out of man and on earth, was clearly, in the Old Testament view of sin, completely inconceivable. Unless forgiveness descended from the Most High God, freedom from sin and all its consequences was held to be impossible. Hence arose those stupendous and

imposing systems of sacrifices which had for their chief aim the propitiating of the Almighty God, with a view to His being mollified toward His erring creatures. The sacrifices were all for One in heaven; and when He was realized, finally, as dwelling in the highest heavens, the sacrifices were burnt in order that they might ascend to Him. The ancient religions, in conviction as well as in practice, maintained strenuously the possibility of changing God's mind with regard to sin. That they endeavoured to effect this change, in order to avert His wrath and curse, due to their sins, is too plainly written in their books and traditional practices to need any extended proof from us.

But it was just this false though consecrated conception of the relationship which actually existed between man and the Supreme Being which Jesus confronted and withstood in His entire ministry.

Perhaps it came before Him in its most aggressive form in the question, 'Who can forgive sins but One, God?' (Mark ii. 7). It was asked in profound scorn as a question which could not be answered except in the sense implied, viz. 'Absolutely, no one can forgive sin save God.' It was accepted as an indisputable and final statement of fact. And as Jesus was not accredited to the Jews as their 'God,' and as He made no pretence of being a deity to them, they could confidently maintain that He blasphemed when He said, 'Thy sins are forgiven' (Mark ii. 5). But Jesus, in all He teaches concerning sin, upholds the doctrine

that not only the Son of man, but *every* son of man, can and ought to forgive sins. The proofs of this assertion are too numerous to be set forth in detail, and, indeed, His position is relevant and intelligible only when we understand Him to antagonize the above question of the taunting Scribes.

The historical environment of His teaching on this matter is given in connection with His healing 'a man sick of the palsy, borne of four' (Mark ii. 1-12; Matt. ix. 2-8; Luke v. 18-26). 'And Jesus seeing their faith, saith unto the sick of the palsy, Son (Child), thy sins are forgiven.' As He utters these words, the Jews at once proclaim Him a blasphemer, for, said they, God alone can forgive sins. There was no power in man, no, not on earth, to forgive sins. How dared He, then, to utter such rash absolution?

In the usual interpretation of Jesus as a mediator between God and man, He is here taken to mean that He *conveys* God's forgiveness, not His own, to the palsy-stricken man. But this is a theological assumption. He knew their reasoning perfectly (Mark ii. 8), but He controverts it as erroneous. He proceeded to heal the man from a desire to convince them that they were in error. He does not act, and makes no profession of acting in God's name or place in pronouncing the man's sins forgiven. The motive for His action is not a mandate given to Him in a past eternity, but is quite new-born in His spontaneous desire to convince the Scribes that, in connection with this present instance, their conception of sin and its

forgiveness was fundamentally false. *'But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power (or, authority) on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy), I say unto thee, Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thy house'* (Mark ii. 10).

The whole force of His teaching, both by word and act, is to show them that sin is not only forgiven on earth, but that the power or authority which forgives is on the earth also. Not Heaven but the earth is the true sphere of forgiveness. They said, 'God forgives.' He said, 'Man forgives.' They reasoned in their minds on the understanding, 'The power is alone in heaven which forgives sin,' but He corrects this by the assertion that the forgiving power was on earth, and in the Son of Man, and in every son of man.

The importance of this deliverance of Jesus on sin cannot be overestimated. It means nothing less than a denial to the sin-axiom of the ancient world that sin is forgiven by God only, or that the power to forgive sin had final determination, or end, only in the Supreme Being. As we have tried to show, the final standard of good and evil for every man is not the God of Heaven, but Jesus on earth. Who or what God is, we only know by who or what Jesus is. He is, therefore, the sole reference for good or evil as a standard of conviction. Sin cannot even be truly conceived in any sense until it is referred to the person of Jesus. He is the ultimate knowledge of all that pertains to sin. 'If I had not come they had not had sin.' As has been pointed out, the Holy

Spirit, even, cannot bring conviction of sin home to man except by first bringing him to Jesus. He convicts the world in respect of sin because they believe not on Jesus. 'And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin . . . of sin, because they believe not on Me' (John xvi. 8-9). And Jesus Himself refers sin to no one save Himself. Moreover, the teaching of the parable of the prodigal son is the statement of Jesus that sin had never been taken up into the mind of even an earthly father. The father there had not judged, or rather, had never set the sin of his sons, elder or younger, 'before his face,' or 'in the light of his countenance.' He had never accepted sin as done against himself. Therefore, no 'change of mind,' or 'change of his will,' was necessary. Now was the Father in Heaven capable of less? Was He not capable of infinitely more? If this earthly father dwelt in a sinless zone, was it conceivable that the All-Father-God should be enveloped by the sins of the world?

The passages in Mark vii. 6-13; Matt. xv. 3-9, may amplify these statements somewhat. Jesus is there tacitly accused by the Pharisees of transgressing the traditions of the elders by permitting His disciples to eat with unwashed hands. He, in turn, accuses them of transgressing the 'commandment' of God (Yahwé) in order to 'hold fast the tradition of men.' For His disciples, He admits the 'transgression.' 'Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God?' This seems as if He referred their sin to One who accepted it as done against Himself. But even

here where the thought of their God (Yahwé) and Sin come into close proximity, Jesus keeps even this Yahwé conception of deity clear away from the sphere of the other. 'God' is not represented as acknowledging, as conscious of, or as indignant at 'transgression' either as He Himself, or as they defined 'transgression' by the test of the words given by Moses. Jesus asserts nothing more than that the very 'word' or 'commandment' which they held as condemning Him was set at nought by themselves, and that therefore they were convicted of hypocrisy in judging His disciples. 'For Moses said' (Mark vii. 10) also shows us that the Yahwé deity whom Moses professed to reveal was *the only deity in His mind* with reference to any 'sin' that had been committed. His reference is to the Tribal, not to the Eternal God whom the world had never known (John xvii. 25). *That Jesus Himself rejected and made void the 'commandment'*—the 'word' of the God (Yahwé),—is, of course, evident throughout His teaching, and especially in His Sermon on the Mount, where he openly rejects and makes void the 'commandments' in the most solemn manner. The whole question rises no higher than Moses'-law and the Moses-Deity, both of which Jesus regarded as of limited validity. The Christian Church has in part, of course, also made void many of the 'commandments' of the same deity. Jesus, indeed, looks forward to the time when they all will be set aside, but not until they are fulfilled. That they can be fulfilled is, however, the best proof of their temporality. His own 'new com-

mandment,' 'Love one another as I have loved you,' is by the nature of things not capable of being 'fulfilled' or filled-up, because His love was as the love of the Father (John xv. 9).

Neither does Jesus limit the power to forgive sins to Himself alone. *He lays it upon every man to forgive sins* (Matt. xviii. 35). The power or authority is not restricted to one person. The power is '*on earth.*' It covers the whole field of human relations.

The fact of sin is, indeed, confined wholly within the boundaries of human relationships in Jesus' teaching, and He does not reveal sin as existing beyond these relational frontiers; and, moreover, all human relations are limited to the area of life. Now, sin does not cover the entire area of human life or of human relations. The human life of Jesus Himself is apart from sin. It is likewise because of the major fact of life existing in Jesus and in man, that the power or authority to forgive sins by either becomes possible. Jesus gives vitality to the palsied man that the Scribes 'may *know* that the Son of Man hath power on earth to forgive sins.'

More and more it becomes apparent to all reflecting people that all life, as life, moves in a realm which knows no sin, and where sin cannot enter. Life is an eternal *substance*, and indestructible as the Eternal Himself, whereas Sin is a *relation* of one life to another; a product of human thought, judgment, and act, which may, and does, come and go in the human firmament as clouds emerge and again disappear in the sky

above us. Sin is done, and again, in forgiveness, it is undone.

Fundamentally, every life-motion or act is, immediately, as unethical as it is apart from and above all human thought or reason. Man cannot by thinking add one cubit to his stature. Life goes forward independent of our volitions, though the human will may easily act as switch-point to her locomotions. No ethical law controls, or need hope to control, the processes of generation and decay. The vital pulse in herb and tree, in animal and man, lies far above such things as rights and wrongs, or anything known to us as 'religious.' All thought or feeling, transferable in any shape into word or act, must necessarily, therefore, emerge from this abyss of life, and also all cancelling of their unworthiness must finally end in the same unfathomable reservoir.

Out of God, the Father, comes forth the life which man apprehends as his *own*, and which in his thought he claims as his '*right*'; but while he falsely makes such assumptions, God need not be regarded as forming the same estimates of relationships of life as man does, and stamping as 'sins' the things which, when done by Himself, He designates as 'good.' It must be held as *absolutely true* that, as Jesus declared, 'there is *nothing from without the man* that going into him can defile him' (Mark vii. 15). 'The things which proceed *out of the man* are those that defile the man.' 'For from within, out of the heart of man, evil thoughts proceed.' Life sends forth its products out of man. But it is man's judgment

alone which stamps them 'good' or 'evil.' The act, the product remains: its *character* is changeable in human thought. Neither virtue nor vice is an absolute, but rises and falls as the ages go onwards, in the billowing and unstable estimates of the human judgment. While man 'counts' and 'reckons' such and such things to be 'evil,' it really cannot be affirmed, independent of human thought, that he is supported by the judgment of the Absolute Being.

To Jesus, therefore, the 'origin of evil' is 'within,' 'out of the heart of man,' and takes its first form there in a Judgment which is entirely man's own. We have attempted in a following chapter on the 'Conscience' to show why such a judgment should arise at all, and the reason for its universality; but we are only concerned here to maintain the general truth that the power or authority that judges certain *relationships* to be 'good' or 'evil,' 'right' or 'wrong,' is ON THE EARTH; and that, as Jesus teaches, it is this power or authority on the earth which also annuls such judgments. 'Out of thine own mouth will I judge thee' is His usual basis of decision as to sin. He does not confront men with a standard judgment above His own and theirs, and measure the human act by an eternal law. He judges on the human platform which man himself has erected into a judgment seat. Now, in doing so, He cannot have been oblivious that in the eyes of His generation He was thereby a blasphemous usurper, and occupying a throne worthy, in their estimation, of God alone. He nevertheless acts for Himself

as the supreme judge, and yet so as to judge on the conditions provided Him in previous human judgments. He knows no absolute reference. Jesus, indeed, judges certain relations of men to be good or evil, and He does so with severity, but in doing so He is careful to tell us that His own judgment is the highest on the matter, because the Father judges no man, and has committed *all* judgment to the Son.

'Sin' has, therefore, no absolute origin and no absolute existence. It rises in man and ends in man. Its force rests on the human judgment, high or Highest. And it is in perfect harmony with all Jesus says on the subject of 'Sin,' that He gives no countenance to the view that man is under hereditary compulsions, or necessitating tendencies to 'sin.' In this respect He is upheld by the facts of modern research. 'Biological science,' says Prof. Jones (*Hib. Journal*, No. 14, p. 312), 'has investigated with great thoroughness the problem of the transmission to offspring of the *acquired* characters of parents, and its verdict is "Not proven."' It is stated that out of 630 children 'picked up selling newspapers between the knees of drunkards in public-houses,' 'only some 23 turned out bad,' and although 'born almost invariably of the worst parents, suffered from their inheritance' nothing at all when rescued young enough.

Perhaps modern theology will take a longer time than science to dissociate itself from the conclusions of Augustine and Calvin. Some of the largest-minded have said 'Man not only sins, but

he is a sinner naturally,' 'It is his nature and disposition to sin' (Principal Tulloch, *Christian Doctrine of Sin*). These awful assertions are rooted, it is believed, in such words of Jesus as are to be found in Matt. xv. 11, 18, 19, 20; vii. 17; xii. 33, 34; ix. 12, where He compares men to trees which bear 'good' or 'corrupt' fruit, and calls them 'offspring of vipers,' and 'evil.' But in the system of Jesus, 'tares' may be '*converted*' to 'wheat,' the 'goat' may turn to be a 'sheep,' and the 'corrupt' tree may change into a 'good' tree. Jesus could only condemn men as 'vipers' and 'offspring of vipers,' for the very reason that *they and their fathers before them had it in their power to be far other kind of creatures*; and the 'account' which He declares (Matt. xii. 36) they must render in 'the day of judgment' is tolerable and reasonable to the universal mind only on this assumption. He evidently means to teach, in these passages, that the 'fruit' of any tree depends wholly on its root, and that man by possessing a new spirit can command thereby a new character. It is natural for man to act. But the judgment which makes his act good or evil rests on no law of Nature. It is entirely a determination which has its origin solely 'out of the heart of man.' To-day, as in the experience of Jesus, it may be hailed as incarnate good, to-morrow as incarnate evil. But the act remains the same, and the absolute judgment on it we do not know. That Jesus thinks of man beyond the mere capacities of an ordinary tree is clear when He counsels '*Either make*

(*poiēsate*) the tree good, and its fruit good, or *make* the tree corrupt and its fruit corrupt.' His generation, and especially the religious portion of it, was convinced that the root had little to do with the 'fruit,' and that so long as the outside of the life seemed clean and blameless the inner root of it might be ignored. They indeed showed a perfect form of Tree, but when He sought 'fruit' thereon, He found it barren.

His phrase, 'If ye then being evil' (Matt. xii. 34; vii. 2) does not necessarily mean 'hereditary' evil, or 'natural' evil, as is often maintained, any more than the 'sick' who need a physician are 'sick' by an inherited sickness. Jesus does not trace the 'evil' or the 'sickness' beyond those whom He addresses. He judges *them* accordingly.

Men inherit the *life* of their parents, but not the parents' 'evil,' or 'sickness,' or 'characters.' Neither the 'good' nor the 'corrupt' disposition can be transmitted to offspring, but only the 'vital spark of heavenly flame.' Perhaps we should be rather inclined to discern the tendency from parent to offspring to be one more biasing to good than to evil, for, speaking generally, when circumstances favour an advance beyond the parents' moral status, the children, as a rule, rise to their superior opportunities. It is, indeed, hard to see how on any other principle the progressive history of the human race could have been steadily upward both in civilization and in morality. The preaching of Jesus assumed as an axiom (and all preachers must follow Him in it), that when the

truth is presented to the human mind, man has the power to obey it and alter his nature, root and fruit, in accordance therewith.

We think it, therefore, in accord with His denial of the ancient Sin-Axiom which declared that 'God alone could forgive sins,' that when Jesus is indignant against men, when He denounces Cities, reproves His kindred, rebukes His Disciples, and launches 'woe' upon 'woe' at His age and generation, the gravamen of His charges should be not because sin had been done against God, but against Man. He upbraids and denounces them for offences against Himself, and against many others, *but He never denounces any one for having sinned against the Being whom He accepted to be His true God and Father.*

As we should expect, then, the facts of the Last Judgment, as He taught them, show that the highest reference given to sin is not God, but Jesus. Inasmuch as it is done to man, it is done unto Jesus, but it is done unto no other. The validity of the action, either as good or bad, ceases and determines in Him as its Ultimate.

It was, however, a high assumption on the part of Jesus to arrogate to Himself the power on earth to forgive sins. In the eyes of His contemporaries it was true blasphemy. He made Himself thereby, 'God,' in their conception. He also placed Himself on a higher plane than they expected their Messiah to occupy, for the Jews did not expect their coming Messiah to forgive sins (Prof. N. Schmidt in *Enc. Bib.*, 'Son of Man'). God alone could forgive sins, they said.

We may take it as certain that if He had known a higher judgment on sin than His own, He would have given place to it, and asserted it instead. But in His inmost consciousness He knew, and He always acts upon the knowledge, that since the dawn of time no conception of divinity and no standard of good had been among men higher than His own. By inherent right of absolute worth His assumption to finally dispose of the sins of the world was amply sustained. The Pattern He was on the earth surpassed in superiority all the perfection which was believed by the ancient Hebrews to reside in The Almighty Yahwé. And it was for this reason that the Holy Ghost was, as it were, compelled, if we may venture such a rude expression, to take 'the things of Jesus,' and not those of the divine Yahwé, and show them unto men, in His work of raising Mankind to the Perfected Life (John xvi. 9).

The cleavage, therefore, is very great between the Hebrew and the Christian ideals of what sin is, and with reference to its obliteration by forgiveness. The Hebrew looked to heaven, the follower of Jesus must henceforth look to the Man Jesus on the earth, in His life as a man, and as a Son of man, for all reference of conduct, and for every test of good or evil. 'If I had not come.' All other references are mere images of vain thoughts, and have no steadfast and imperishable basis in the facts of life.

It follows that the new basis of ethics given by Jesus necessarily created a new system of practical religion. He inherited, indeed, something from

the religion of the Hebrews, but nothing that was either vital, fundamental, or necessary. He built on a new foundation, and yet one old as Nature, and unlike the ancient teachers, the prophets, priests, and wise men of old, *He excluded the idea of God from association with the conception of sin.* Jesus sees God as sending sunshine and rain on the good and the evil, the just and the unjust, as conferring kingdoms, feeding ravens, discerning hearts, and directing men to hear His Son Jesus. He describes Him as His Father, as the One who alone is Good, who is 'our Father,' who is a Spirit, who knows our needs and supplies them before we know them or ask them, who is Lord of heaven and earth, who gives His Holy Spirit to men, who appoints the places in Jesus' kingdom, who delivers all power to His Son, who is the source of all life, even the life of Jesus, who seeks men to worship Him, who gives the true Bread from heaven, who sends His Son to this world and honours Him, teaches Him and loves Him.

But there is no authentic statement out of Jesus' mouth that the Being whom He worships as 'My God' is conscious of being sinned against, and resentful against man because of it. This cannot be found in the Four Gospels. Representations of God as furious in His anger, sending fire in His wrath, rending with His overflowing showers in His anger (Ezek. xiii. 13), blighting and blasting, withering and wasting in His vengeance, are all unknown in the message of Jesus. Yet no man has had a deeper 'sense' of sin. His is the

mightiest of all the mighty voices of time which have 'judged' sin. The hate of hate against sin is His special dowry. All utterances in the Old Testament regarding iniquity pale before His denunciations in the twenty-third chapter of Saint Matthew. But how careful He is to eliminate the Name of God from all such baleful associations. No one has so earnestly and solemnly gazed on the bundles of fruitless branches which are gathered to be burned, has so clearly limned perdition, and has so sternly divided the sheep from the goats. Yet in this so conspicuous above all men, Jesus is yet the first among men to hesitate to refer sin to God for judgment. He maintains that the Father judges no man, and claims the initiative in such judgment as entirely His own. God sends Him not into the world to judge it (John iii. 17), or with any mandate to condemn it. God's mandate is that He shall save the world by giving it life. He is 'sent' to do this. Jesus speaks for God as the reference of life, but solely for Himself as the reference of sin. The Father gives life, and the purpose of Jesus is never to mediate the wrath of God, but always and only the life of the Father.

But He goes further. Jesus, indeed, teaches that man is only like God when he does *not* judge *and has no charge to make against his fellow*. This is the dominant thought in the Sermon on the Mount. If God had judged man, Jesus must have held His peace, for man, in judging man, would have been only like God; but Jesus commands men *not to judge* even the worst of men, *in order that they may be like the Father* (Matt.

v. 43-48). It is the glorious Gospel of Jesus that God retains no sin-charge against any man, even the worst of men, and this fact is to Jesus the prime reason why all men should do likewise. He implies that it is the only way to perfection, or to the assimilation by man of the nature and character of God. As Jesus scans the heavens, He discerns no sin-judgment between heaven and earth, between God and Man. To be like the Father is to have nothing against man. To have forgiven all, yea, never to have accused, or judged man, is to be perfect as the Father is perfect.

His judgment of sin is thus not based by Jesus on the example of God. Jesus' judgment, for example, is not a decision between a perfect and divine standard fixed in heaven, which is vindicated by an Almighty Arm, and defection from that standard by human beings on earth. It is a decision referred to a Man's life on earth, as the supreme and perfect standard, and every man's life and conduct as compared with that perfect Man. Jesus has all power given Him to judge, not by reason of such having been given Him by God, *apart* from His own conduct. As we have tried to show in chapter vi., He is man's judge and the only possible one, *because He as a man has first lived the perfect Father's life*. He also seems to hint that when any of His followers live the perfect Father's life as He has done, they likewise, in virtue of the same fact, shall become judges of men. 'Verily I say unto you, that ye *which have followed Me*, in the regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit on the throne of His

glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel' (Matt. xix. 28). Jesus likewise on the same grounds judges the 'prince of this world' (John xvi. 11; xii. 31; xiv. 30). If, indeed, God had judged man by His own absolutely perfect existence, it seems the injustice would have been truly awful. But Jesus never takes up this position. Judgment of Man begins and ends with Himself.

There are, indeed, three statements which seem to run counter to the view of the exclusion of God from judgment of sin. For example, in Matt. vi. 14-15, it is said, 'But if ye forgive not men their trespasses (*Ta Paraptōmata*), neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.' Also in Matt. xviii. 35, where the unmerciful servant is 'delivered to the tormentors till he should pay all that he was due,' it is said, 'So shall also My heavenly Father do unto you, if ye forgive not every one his brother from your hearts.' Jesus also teaches the prayer, 'Forgive us our debts as we have forgiven our debtors.' The verse 'Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do' (Luke xxiii. 34), cannot be considered sufficiently authenticated to be reliable. Westcott and Hort class it 'rejected,' and it is not found in Codex B, 'the central witness for the text' of the Gospels. The disputed parable, also (Luke xviii. 1-8—the importunate widow), from the provincial conception of an avenging God which is its dominant feature, can not be employed authoritatively. We have Yahwé there, and not the Father of Jesus.

But however they may be taken, one thing is

clear, in none of these passages is the Father's forgiveness or unforgiveness *the initial act*. *His judgment is represented as following and depending upon the act of man*. The human forgiveness or unforgiveness precedes and conditions these acts of the Father. The judgment of the Father does not first come down from heaven to earth. On the contrary, the pattern of judgment ascends to Him from man. In the Lord's Prayer, the Father's forgiveness of 'debt' is asked conform to what man has already done to man. 'As we *have* forgiven our debtors.' Similarly, in every passage where the Father is said to forgive, or not to forgive, the judgment implied in these acts is one secondary to the forgiveness or unforgiveness first formed on earth by man. It rests, primarily, on the contingent and not on an absolute. Jesus, in short, represents such acts as *originating with man* and not with the Father. At the furthest, His act is an endorsement of human acts, and is not strictly His own in the absolute sense. The key to the difficulty is found in Jesus' declaration 'With what judgment *ye* judge, *ye* shall be judged: and with what measure *ye* mete, it shall be measured unto you.' All judgment upon sin (if indeed these passages point to 'sin' as Jesus understood it) is still seen to rise *primarily* out of man, and out of the Son of man; and then whatsoever is bound on earth is said also to be bound in heaven, and whatsoever is loosed on earth is then loosed in heaven. At first sight, these passages seem to give to the God-Father a variable nature and a retaliatory disposition similar

to man. This would be disastrous. But a large part of Jesus' teaching, and many of His parables especially, must be viewed as considerate of the inability of the human mind to understand the Father-God as He really is. But even these seem intentionally designed to bend the human inclinations away from any unforgiveness of man. The three passages all urge to human mercifulness, and complete forgiveness by men one of another. He makes the popular conception of an avenging God fill a coercive function in leading men to a higher and more loving relation to their fellow-men.

It was impossible for Jesus to abolish all at once the conception of God as Judge, and Avenger. It had then in His day, and has yet in ours, both a doctrinal as well as a psychological force on human conceptions of Deity. It is self-evident that if man had never been able to conceive God as judging and condemning man, his own judgments upon men would have been vastly weakened in their historical expression. That his own judgment and condemnation of man was also the judgment and condemnation of God, has been, of course, the driving force behind those religious convictions of the past ages which have traced the darkest and bloodiest records upon the pages of Time. Man has attributed his own mind to God. It has been done in ignorance of the real nature of God, for when God is truly seen as the Father, He is beheld as One who neither judges nor condemns man Himself, nor yet sends His Son into the world to judge or condemn it. But as

a matter of fact, these passages just quoted do not refer to 'Sins,' but to 'Debts.' The word used is not '*Hamartia*,' the common word for 'Sin,' but *Opheilēmata* (Matt. vi. 12), *Opheilēn* (Matt. xviii. 32). '*Paraptōmata*' translated 'trespasses' in Matt. vi. 14-15 is clearly equated in Jesus' mind with '*Opheilēmata*' (debts) in verse 12.

Luke, also, has (xi. 4), 'Forgive us our sins' (*Hamartias*), but when he adds 'for we ourselves also forgive every one that is indebted (*Opheilonti*) to us,' it is clear that while using the word 'sin' it is 'debt' that is in his mind. The 'trespasses' in Matt. vi. 14-15, and the 'sins' in Luke xi. 4, equate with 'debts,' and wilful intention on the part of any one to do wrong is not implied in either case. It is not, therefore, *Guilt* which is dealt with in these passages. It is *Debt*, which need not connote the idea of wrong at all. For even Jesus felt under debt to God, to worship, to obey, to please Him, and to finish His work; and He desired in Gethsemane some mitigation of its awful weight; but sin and 'guilt' were far from Him. Jesus has not, in the Lord's Prayer, asked any man to stand before the Father as one clothed in guilt, but simply as one confessing indebtedness. 'Forgive us our debts' is only another phase of the prayer 'Let this cup pass from Me.' And it is wise, and reasonable that we should supplicate for this, because it is just in our indebtednesses that we find the hazards of all our sinning. It is in them that we have our 'temptations'; and when Jesus teaches us to ask God for deliverance from

the one, and forgiveness of the other, He is not making the Father our judge thereby, but providing for the Father's help, when, like His own in the Garden, our 'temptations' and 'debts' are too heavy to bear. Moreover, both debts and temptations, it is evident, *can* be made to 'pass' from us, but guilt, once it is judged to be ours, can never be other than ours to all eternity. The question of *Sin*, therefore, in these three passages, does not arise.

There is also a broader interpretation of these passages which likewise appears to us to satisfy the facts of the case. A forgiving heart can alone know forgiveness, and an unforgiving heart can know nothing else than unforgiveness. Our own condition of soul necessarily determines the way in which we apprehend the mind of the Father. For it is ever through the human that we can know the Divine, even as it is only by the child that we know the Father. If we do not know the earthly, how can we know the heavenly? 'For he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen' (1 John iv. 20). The heart that is soft will feel the softness of the Father's love, but the heart that is hard will find it easier to conceive that the Father's is hardened also. 'From him that hath not shall be taken away even that he hath.' Jesus is not teaching that the Father's decisions are dependent upon our own, or that He 'changes His mind' as we change ours. His doctrine stands on the statement, 'With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what measure ye mete,

it shall be measured unto you.' And this judgment has been committed solely to the Son of Man.

It is Gospel that the Father has forgiven all sin, or rather, has not judged at all; He is the Uncondemning One; but man must first come to the knowledge of this Good News before he can enter into the joy of it. And the nearer he can approach to an infinite forgiveness of his fellow-man, the closer will he approximate in his own experience to the truth of that absence of sin-judgment in the Father. But, on the other hand, the more completely he carries out an unforgiving spirit against his brother, so also the further away he must 'depart' from the Father. That the Father-God has really forgiven with an *infinite forgiveness* is, of course, the foundation of this truth, and it is assumed by Jesus in His counsel to Peter when he asked Him how oft he should forgive his brother (Matt. xviii. 21-22). 'Until seventy times seven,' said Jesus, and this was tantamount to Infinity in Jesus' mind; endless, unlimited forgiveness, or rather, uncondemnation. And we may be sure that Jesus was not asking Peter to do what the Father Himself had not done.

The Father does not really forgive or condemn, therefore, because man forgives or condemns. The truth is all the other way. It is because the Father-God has forgiven man unto Infinity, and from Infinity, that Jesus boldly asks all men to be like the Father-God in forgiving 'until seventy times seven.'

But it may yet be pertinently asked—If the

Father has so forgiven all, why does Jesus teach us still to *pray* to the Father 'Forgive us our Debts'? The answer must follow the lines of the above train of reasoning.

Knowing the lacks of life we pray, but the Father also knowing our lacks has already given before we pray. Nothing is changed by prayer except that we ourselves are changed by it towards realizing and experiencing the things we pray for. Prayer cannot change the mind of God, and no conceivable answer to any asking on our part could render to us an ampler provision than that which God has already bestowed upon all. But we do not *experience* all that He has provided, and we have not entered upon the inheritance which He has already given into our hands. It is prayer which helps us to do so. We ascend the mountain to see the wide world that is ours. Prayer does not beget for us new favours, for the Father has already said, 'All that I have is thine,' but it enables us experimentally to enter upon those which He has so bountifully given long before our asking. Prayer is the first instrument of information and realization to the soul concerning the things which the Father has already done for it. It is wise and good if prayer enable us to realize the Father, but it is vain to conceit that our prayer is to change His will.

For example, we may pray that God would spare our lives, that He would spare the child's life so dear to us, that He would give the rain which the withering crops require so much, or would stem the devastating floods which are

drifting them to destruction. But though not one petition were granted to us in the way we desired, the prayer would be abundantly effective if it were instrumental in showing us that nothing good is done till the will of God is done, and that if these things were God's will, nothing that we could ask could surpass them in realizing our ultimate good.

Jesus Himself was so taught by the Father in Gethsemane. He prayed that the 'cup' might pass. His first prayer was not answered. The Father still held out the 'cup.' Again He prayed that the 'cup' might pass, and a second time the Father's will was otherwise. In the profoundest agony, Jesus prayed a third time that the 'cup' might pass, but this time He fully realized that it was *not* the Father's will that the 'cup' should pass. He had now no hesitation. The Father's will was to Him clearly defined, and fixed. He was convinced that the Father had given Him better than He had asked, and so He rose into the exaltation of complete resignation. 'It is enough, the Hour is come.' 'The "cup" which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?'

Similarly, although the Father has never had anything against any man, now or from eternity, man requires to take this truth up into his understanding, or experience, and prayer is the means by which this result is realized. The Prodigal, for example, did not know that his father had had nothing against him, during all his absence from home, *until he came praying* for degradation from sonship to the level of a servant. And when

his father refused to answer his prayer, and revealed, instead, the fullest exhibition of bounty and good-will, his prayer, though not answered in the way he desired, was nevertheless answered in a greater gain and in a fuller experience of benefit. So also, God is naturally more concerned to reveal Himself to us than to observe the narrow path of our blind and often unwise desires. All our prayers may be regarded, indeed, as, in reality, *prayers for stones*, when contrasted with the high value of those blessings of life-giving bread which He, in His wisdom and love, chooses rather in answer to bestow upon us. In a true sense, God never answers any prayer, for He never answers it in the *exact* limited sense in which it is sought. But when by prayer we experience the consciousness of being in His presence, it matters not what we have actually asked for, because then we cannot fail to feel how foolish are all our shallow petitions in hearing His words, 'It is the Father's good pleasure to give thee,' not this and that fragment of good, but—'The Kingdom!'

CHAPTER X

JESUS AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES ON SIN. HIS 'LAW' OF FORGIVENESS

THIS position is further strengthened when we consider that Jesus' conception of sin was certainly not identical with that which was held by His contemporaries. But if the modern conception of sin is *practically the same* as that found in the Old Testament, and held by His contemporaries, then it seems to follow that the view of sin given us in our Creeds is not the same which was taught by the Master. No such conception can rise higher than the standard to which it is referred, and neither the standard of the nature and being of Yahwé, nor the ideal of perfect human life, which is set forth in the Old Testament, corresponds with the teaching of Jesus on Sin. He was decidedly antagonistic to the sin-dogmas of His own time.

I. The conception of sin which ruled the religious thought of His contemporaries is preserved for us, as fossils are in rocks, in the ninth chapter of S. John. Sin as the dark agency presiding above the creation of the child; as forestalling the new personality of the coming babe,

and as moulding and measuring the organs of its body, is seen underlying the question, 'Rabbi, who did sin, this man, or his parents, *that he was born blind?*' (John ix. 2). Jesus controverts this assertion, and says, 'Neither did this man sin, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him.' He further declares, in the teeth of all they believed, that blindness, far from being an evidence of sin in any one, is in reality the true mark of the sinless state.

'Jesus said unto them, If ye were blind, ye would have no sin' (John ix. 41). The blindness of the eye is God's work, and is to be viewed from the standpoint of life which He gives or withholds, in whole or in part of our being; but sin is a subsequence of life, and has no control over its initiatives. The true cause of the man's blindness of eye lay higher than 'this man' or 'his parents,' or anyone or anything but God, who is the source of life, and determines its way and workings in man and in all the living. The only real blind are they who do not see God in such blindness of the eye; in the blindness of the tree; and of the plant; and in all imperfection, in short; *for only in what we call 'imperfection' has He yet manifested Himself.* But to see God in anything, or at all, is to be pure in heart (Matt. v. 8). And God and sin cannot be seen in the same object. The Pharisees saw the sin in the blindness, but they saw not God; therefore, their sin remained (John ix. 41).

Jesus thus associates God and infirmity together,

but not God and sin. Infirmary is referred to Him, but sin is not referred; that is, God works through the infirm and imperfect in order to manifest Himself, but with no cognisance of sin as furnishing Him with a motive to act punitively towards it.

The basis of the Pharisaic reasoning was doubtless to be found in their Moral Law, with perhaps special emphasis laid on that jealousy in Yahwé which visited the iniquity of the fathers upon the third and fourth generation. But what they saw as a manifestation of sin, Jesus discerned as a manifestation of God. The same facts were accepted by both, but Jesus refused to give to the facts the moral value assigned to them by the Pharisees. The facts conveyed to them an increased 'sense of sin' in the course and development of human life, and to Jesus a clearer vision of the presence of the Father-God there.

His position is perhaps more clearly defined to us when the question is assumed to be capable of being put the other way, viz. Who did righteously, you, or your parents, that ye were born seeing? The answer, manifestly, would be the same, viz. Neither you, nor your parents, but that the works of God might be made manifest.

Jesus, therefore, must be held as maintaining the universal truth that nothing appears in this world nor in the realm of Nature on account of reward or punishment. God does nothing because man has done, or omitted to do something else, but acts solely from His own nature with the purpose of revealing Himself. The ALL that is,

in man or in Creation, is a manifestation of the Eternal Being. He is as much the Father-God in infirmity, weakness, disease, and death, as in health, perfection, and happiness. If we discern Him not in certain phenomena, it is because of blindness. According to the reasoning of Jesus, no infirmity, no deformity, no feature of any kind in the human body can be taken as substantiating Sin as its cause, but only as revealing the presence of God and His Work.

Therefore, such Sin-values as men from time to time put upon certain appearances in Man or in Nature are not to be granted an absolute reference and validity, but are to be held as purely relative and temporary, conform to the particular conception of God which dominates, for the time being, their religious belief. The Sin-value will change and ultimately pass away, but God remains the same, unchanged and unneeding change.

II. It is in conformity with this Pharisaic belief of a precedent agency of sin in the child's existence, that the dogma was also asserted in the blind man's face, 'Thou wast altogether *born in sins*.' Born in sins! The little child whom Jesus set in the midst of His disciples as the highest representative of His kingdom, these ancient people (and perhaps people not yet quite so ancient) beheld as coming forth from uncleanness and the murkiness of iniquity, condemned and loathsome to God before he had even opened his eyes upon the earth! As we have seen, Jesus discerned in special vividness of vision the presence of the holy Father when twain became 'one flesh,' but both

ancients and, alas, many moderns, have welcomed their little ones to the sphere of Time, with the same spirit, and almost with the words which were flung at Jesus Himself, 'Thou hast a devil' (John vii. 20).

Perhaps it is only in these latter days of ours that we are beginning to realize that in the gift of human life there is also given something which is not to be comprehended within the bounds of any known moral 'law.' The grossness of the human mind with reference to the whole subject of sin is nowhere perhaps exemplified so glaringly as in that expectation which is so universally thwarted when the new-born child on its entrance into this world proceeds to prove by its every movement that its first duty here is not submissively to *obey*, but to *live*. Parents early discover that the child has not the least inclination to 'obey,' and triumphantly point to the fact as proof of inward corruption of its whole nature! The inward impulses of life must be foul through and through, they argue, else the obedience of the child to parental command would be perfect. And it is believed that the problem of the Child is completely solved when the Creeds can assert this phenomenon to be due to 'Original Sin.'

Now, the first point that calls for light is *the right* which the parent assumes to command the child to obey, and as a consequence, to treat his disobedience as 'sin.' What right has any parent to judge thus? Has he a higher, or more absolute, right to command than the child has to ignore his command? The right to command rests

clearly on the assumption by the parent that the child is *his own* because he has begotten him. But this assumption is never allowed by Nature, for production, unlike original creation, does not imply possession. Mere communication or succession of life does not imply superiority, though it grants priority in time. Moreover, no babe comes into this world endowed with a sense of being the possession of anyone. This result is a matter of education. Consequently, the babe originally has no consciousness that he has obligations to anyone, and hence he does not possess any sense of having done wrong in refusing to do the parental will. All his impulses and motions are referred to life rather than to law, and so aim at existence rather than goodness. In doing so, he is faithful, unconsciously, to the highest mandate. For life is served by law, and carries a higher authority than law, even as the living man is also lord of the Law of Sabbaths. We cannot measure a child's actions by our conventional notions of propriety, good behaviour, or even morality, for the child has not learned to be subject to man, and acts only under the Life-instincts given it in its personality. It is really obeying God rather than man in doing so.

The babe, therefore, is never originally conscious of being a child in the strict sense of having some one related to it as a father, nor at first, any consciousness of being related to any one man more than to any other. The babe, like all new-born things, is only conscious, with a babe's consciousness, of itself and its wants, and is completely

satisfied in every way when its person and all its wants are gratified. That is, there is an endowment given in life of boundless freedom, and a latency of its being perfectly free *to be all that natural organization has fitted it to be*, without reference to any obligation to anyone or anything else. The babe has as much a latency of being the all, and the absolute one, and a sole law to itself in everything, as we understand God actually to be. The babe acts really as one who recognizes no relationship, and no 'right' of relationship to anyone or anything, and feels no obligation or sense of duty to anything beyond self. And it does so from those instincts of life, which carry with them a far higher imperative than any moral 'law' known to us.

Now this state cannot be an inheritance from parents, or from habits formed in their lives. Everything in the history of the human race has tended to crush this freedom of the personality. But for a brief space all the newly-born possess it, and are divinely joyful in its possession. Independent, unrelated, boundless life is the babe's assumption, and it is always acted upon. Everything is attacked and claimed as of right, *if it contribute to life and its wants*. Self is assumed to be supreme. Every motion, therefore, takes its initiative, not from right, or moral imperatives, but from life.

We do not require to insist that this characteristic of the babe is one which is shared by all things at their birth. Hence, it cannot have come into the Universe through man, first or last, seeing

that it must have been known to all living things millions of years before his period. The characteristic, therefore, must point to a principle of original life, and be an inheritance from Life's Author.

That which is so natural and so universal must itself be part of the nature of the universal Father of all. It must descend from some common source, and as it comes with life, and life only, it must derive from the Father who alone giveth life. Babe-life and babe-sin do not in this way begin together. The child has obligations to life before it has obligations to any law, although babe-life at its sources can hardly be conceived to own obligations of any kind save those common to the life instincts of all the living. Therefore, neither wrong nor right, as moralities, have any existence to it, for all life at its sources moves above moral, or directive law, and is itself the fountain and director of every law, and consequently takes precedence of all others.

Sin begins where Jesus said it began, 'From within, out of the heart.' But sin does not begin contemporaneously with any new personality, any more than it began with Jesus; and as there is no divine or ultimate right of possession in the child by any parent, and none such acknowledged by Nature at large, or by the child-nature in particular, we must conclude that the entire class of so-called 'sins' of which children are accused by their parents are not necessarily, and at the same time, sins in the sight of God. Such accusations of sinfulness made against the babe are just as correct, that is to say, as the accusation of the

Disciples, that either the sin of his parents, or the sin of the man himself had produced his blindness. Or, more generally, the sin-conception of man is, at no period of history, to be held as co-ordinating with the sin-conception of Jesus, or with that of the Father. The only absolute principle which the Author of any single individual life has given to it as primary guide and law is discernibly one of boundless freedom, conform to His own, to do as its nature, and to the full what nature dictates. *Original Life, and not 'Original Sin,' is the grand fact to be grasped in understanding the problem of the child.* Jesus found in the child the revelation of the Father, and in finding the Father there, He found no sin. For we can hardly believe that He forgot to except the 'sin' in the child when He said, 'Whosoever shall receive one of such little children in My name, receiveth Me' (Mark ix. 37). We can hardly think that He courted defilement of His kingdom when He declared, 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein' (Mark x. 15). The truth rather is, the more we know the child, the nearer we are able to realize the nature of Jesus, and through Jesus the nature of the Father also. To become like a little child is not to become liker one 'born in sins,' but liker one born from above, born of the Father. For of such are His kingdom.

The contemporaries of Jesus thus beheld the dawn of life enveloped in gloom. To Jesus, on the contrary, the babe is laid in the earthly parents'

arms out of the arms of the Father in heaven. To His contemporaries, sin was closer to the young life than the life was to the mother's womb, and as God was also believed to be totally unable to look upon sin except with abhorrence, it followed that the babe's existence was foredoomed at its very inception. God could not even look upon it. Necessarily, therefore, a mediator was essential in approaching Him. Moreover, this mediator, father, friend, or priest, must be righteous, for, said all the authorities of Jesus' time, '*God heareth not sinners*' (John ix. 31).

We have here, then, a dark track of baleful falsehood, streaming through the plain of religious dogma occupied by the people of Jesus' generation. They observe that the unbounded freedom inherent in the child, the primary hereditation from the Author of its being, by the first of all 'rights' leads the child to act directly according to life's sacred dictates rather than in accordance with the secondary 'laws' of its parents. 'Sin' is then attributed to the child, as a consequence, on this basis of disobedience, and henceforward, by an easy generalization, all flesh is beheld lying in wickedness. As no parent would willingly bestow this bias to disobedience upon the child, the only possible solution of the mystery must be found, said they, in ante-natal influences. The child is then believed to inherit this evil. It is '*born in sins*.' The idea of sin suggests its punishment, and so, 'born in sins' naturally leads to '*born blind*.'

III. And further, as sin 'cuts off' all such sinful

ones from God, He can have no communion with them, for '*God heareth not sinners.*' And out of this conviction springs the absolute necessity for the mediator, the priest. It is here, indeed, where all the priesthoods, ancient and modern, Pagan, Jewish, or Christian, have had their birth and power. For when God does not hearken to sinners, it is imperative that one be found who, being believed to be pure in body and soul by certain holy exercises, can enter the holy place where God dwells, and plead on behalf of the sinners outside.

'The Father Himself loveth you' is Jesus' counter to such a dogma. *God does hear sinners*, yea, even the lowest prodigals, with never a mediator or priest in sight between; and the publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven repenting, and before those who linger for the priest's shoulder to lean upon.

Religion in the past has thus been evolved from the reverences clustering around the ancestor, and the parent. Every child has accepted its idea of God through the model given in its parents. For in its beginning, the parent is 'God' to the child. All the 'divine' laws, therefore, to the child, are enlargements of the laws imposed at one time or another by parents. It is for this reason, perhaps, that God as Lawgiver and Judge looms larger in all religions than God as Father. Religion has been a growth out of Authority, instead of out of Life. Naturally the one begets 'Sin,' while the other begets 'Love.'

Jesus interprets His ethics through the facts

of life, and so finds the path to sinlessness in its sources in the child, and in the Father in heaven. For all life moves above 'duty,' in its imperatives, and is the force which gives every ethic its being, use, and place. Every law is a handmaid to life. All are on the sinless way when on the way of life, for it is the way to the Father.

We venture, therefore, to infer that if there were no judgment of sin upon the earth, neither would men find it in heaven. Jesus plainly assumes that if all men forgave all men, then earth would conform to heaven, for God has so loved the world and has not condemned it. Then, indeed, would men realize that divine attitude to sin which St. Peter learned from his Lord.

As referred to above, the 'Law of forgiveness' is given to the world, for all time, and for all men, under all circumstances, in the following dialogue—'Then came Peter, and said to Him, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? until seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I SAY NOT UNTO THEE, UNTIL SEVEN TIMES, BUT, UNTIL SEVENTY TIMES SEVEN' (Matt. xviii. 21-22).

'Probably no reader of this passage would doubt,' says Sir John Seeley in his *Ecce Homo* (chap. xxiii.), 'that it means absolutely to take away all limitations of forgiveness, and to proclaim that there is no injury, however deadly, or however frequently repeated, which the Christian is not to forgive upon submission made.' Sir John considers, however, that this law of unlimited forgiveness was given for a special purpose, and to suit special circumstances which 'have long

passed away,' and that 'Christ's law, therefore, ceases in many cases to be serviceable as a rule of life.' 'Christ's law may be no longer an invariable law for action, but it is an invariable law for feeling and for motive. Instead of abstaining from prosecution it may be a positive duty to prosecute, but it must no longer be a *pleasure* to prosecute.'

Now, Jesus is not submitting to men an impossible and impracticable 'Law of forgiveness,' as this distinguished Author seems to suppose. It is not merely another moral law added to the number which 'no mere man since the fall is able in this life perfectly to keep.' Can any one venture to say that Jesus had not Himself observed it 'perfectly'? According to the trend of reasoning which we have tried to maintain in these pages, it was only possible for Jesus, as 'the Way,' and 'the Truth,' to lay down such a 'law' to man, after, and because He had lived it. It was the law of unlimited forgiveness because it was first the law of unlimited suffering. Jesus had discovered that the human heart, as well as that of the Father-God, has room enough and to spare for all the injuries, evils, and iniquities innumerable which either man or demon can charge it with.

It was not a dream, but a historical fact. Jesus had lived it to its utmost. He felt no desire to 'prosecute' any one, and all the precepts of the Sermon on the Mount are in consonance with this teaching, that men shall absolutely forgive their fellowman, in order that they may become like the Father in Heaven who Himself forgives abso-

lutely all men, even the worst, the enemy, nay, even the 'prosecutor.' The 'Law' rests first upon the nature and character of God, and, second, upon the proved historical practice of His Son Jesus. Jesus, a man, had so lived, and so forgiven, and therefore was able to say to Peter and to all men, 'Follow Me.'

The 'Law of forgiveness,' according to Jesus, is simply FORGIVENESS TO INFINITY. It is so because it is a reflex of the nature of God as revealed in the 'Father' of Jesus. But an infinite forgiveness in God is equal to absence of any charge against man from infinity, or, the exercise to infinity of that power which 'endureth all things,' that is, the power of Love (1 Cor. xiii. 7). Jesus discovered this power in Himself. The heart of a man held so much; and inevitably, as a consequence, He regarded it as the revelation of the heart of His Father in heaven. How, otherwise, could He have so peremptorily insisted that Peter should do what God Himself had not done?

The Sin-axiom of the ancients, therefore, which referred sin to God for forgiveness, was shown by Jesus to be founded on a false conception of the nature and character of the God, His Father. Sin began 'from within, out of the heart of man,' but so also it ended in that same reflex of the infinite. The power is on earth which forgives. It is an impossible function in Heaven where there is no judgment given upon man. The power to sin was given into the hands of man, and so likewise the power to forgive sins was given to man.

In harmony with this limitation of sin to the

human sphere alone, it is worthy of note that Jesus claims absolute authority over the realm of sin. In Mark iii. 20-30, in speaking of Sin against the Holy Ghost, He guarantees both what sins shall, and what sins shall not be forgiven. He is sole Arbiter of judgment upon man. He creates the only Ethic man need regard. Harnack has well said, 'Jesus defined the sphere of the ethical in a way in which no one before Him had ever defined it. But if ever we are threatened with doubts as to what He meant, we must steep ourselves again and again in the Beatitudes of the Sermon on the Mount. They contain His ethics and His religion, united at the root, and freed from all external and particularistic elements' (*What is Christianity?* p. 76).

Now, the grand reference of sin in the Sermon on the Mount is to man, and to the Son of Man, Jesus Himself. He formulates a new definition of sins, not by what was said 'to them of old time,' but by what He now on Earth says. Man is to sacrifice himself for his brother, and agree quickly even with his fellow, the adversary, and throw all ideas of so-called 'justice' to the winds. The attitude of the 'Father' and of 'God' is one of blessing, of giving all to all, of absolute forgiveness, but never of judgment, or of condemnation of sin. All such judgment is taken up by Himself into His own hands, and His own reference of judgment is further based on the judgment passed in each man's own heart (Matt. vii. 2). Moreover, as He pictures men crowding around the door of the kingdom of heaven, eagerly and vainly seeking

to enter, He does not represent either 'God' or the 'Father' as expelling them to ruin. The awful catastrophic forces are made by man himself in founding upon the uncertain sand, and by the Son of man who professes that He never knew them, saying, 'Depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.' And further, all the parables which treat of judgment upon human conduct portray Jesus alone as Judge. The 'lord,' the 'householder,' the 'king,' the 'bridegroom' and the other symbolizing characters, are merely the stage-figures in which Jesus arrays His person for teaching purposes. And the teaching is ever the same, viz. On earth and in man, what is designated as 'Sin' by man, takes its rise, and within the same area and by the same agencies and agents it finally ceases and determines.

And to support our reasoning, we must again refer to the Last Judgment. On what principle of judgment is this stupendous event pivoted by Him? Does He centre it on the judgment of the Eternal Being? Does He show us the Almighty God regulating His final judgment of Man on a basis of His own absolute perfection? On the contrary, the principle of final judgment on Man and on all his works is found alone in Man, and has its origin only in Man. 'Inasmuch as YE did it.' 'Inasmuch as YE did it not.' There is no appeal to the Father, or to the Eternal God, either to forgive or to glorify, for even the Father does not judge. Sin, at the Last Judgment, ceases and determines forever in man, and in the Son of man.

Moreover, *the scene* of the Last Judgment is not in heaven, but on the earth. The final destinies of Man are decided on the soil where the acts and characters of men found origin and development. The Judgment is before 'all the nations,' and to them the Son of man *comes* in His glory on the clouds of heaven. There is no suggestion of eternity in the matter (Matt. xxvi. 64; xvi. 27; xxv. 31; xxiv. 30; Mark xiii. 26-27; Luke ix. 26; xii. 8; xxii. 69). And to these direct statements regarding the Judgment being on the Earth, we must also add the indirect references to the same fact which seem to be given in such parables as the Ten Virgins, the Ten Talents, the Marriage Supper, and similar others. As has been already pointed out in a former chapter, the Angels are with Him when He comes, but only as reapers and gatherers. Apart from these doubtful beings, or agencies, no other creature save man is visible in the transcendent spectacle. Neither is there any other voice heard there than that which issues out of human lips. Human heart appeals to human hearts through human articulations only. Human lips pronounce blessing or cursing, and Sin is beheld from first to last, moving wholly in the realm of humanity, with its ultimate reference not resting in the Father-God, but in the Man Jesus, His Son.

In such solemn and final adjustment of all human rights and wrongs, we should expect that the charge of sin would lie ultimately between the Supreme Being and Man. We should expect the

Great God to say, 'Against Me, and Me only, hast thou sinned, and done evil in My sight.' 'Thy sins have ever been before Me, and set in the light of My countenance.' But no such thoughts intrude upon the vision of Jesus. The arc of Sin, springing from the heart of man, and embracing Time in its curve, does not include the Father-God in its sweep. Jesus sees the dark and sinister Influence working like a storm through all human feeling and all human history (Matt. xxiii. 29-39), but only as a limited power which moves the ocean of universal humanity to measurably contingent depths, the calm of God reposing serenely above and below these awful billows which appear to short-sighted mortals to envelop Eternity itself in their bosom. If we could see Sin from the standpoint of the Absolute, how many illusions would disappear!

Our way of looking at sin is, in general, analogous to our current method of contemplating the phenomenon we call Night. Looking up into midnight darkness we judge that Night stretches to the stars, and practically to infinity. The truth is otherwise. Its area is fractional in universal space, and, though vast to the human view, can scarcely include a tiny dark spot when beheld from the Infinite. All overhead is actually ablaze with light at midnight, as we discover when the moon or any other obstructive body interposes to reflect some of the luminous stream to the earth. But, to the spectator, all above seems enveloped in darkness, because the eye does not see the light there under conditions which make belief in it

possible. Scientific, or reasoned, knowledge must create this belief. And, similarly, for mankind, sin has seemed to flood all spiritual space, the eye of the awed soul gazing up into the infinite, and seeing there only doubtful evidences of hopeful light in what appeared to be one vast unbounded universe of guilt and judgment-darkness. It is the interposing presence of Jesus in these spaces beyond our darkness which, for the first time in the history of mankind, has revealed by reflection the Father's endless fulness of light and love throughout all those spiritual bounds, where 'justice and judgment,' wrath and the gloom of the Pit, were believed to preserve everlasting supremacy. Sin, when seen from the standpoint of the absolute, and as Jesus beholds it, is discovered to be like earth's Night, awful and subduing, yet contingent and temporary; an imperfect conception formed in the human mind, and destined ultimately to yield to higher light, to fuller knowledge of the Supreme Being, and the common life-relations which exist between Him and Man. 'The worst and cruellest to our eyes,' says Carlyle, 'is not what it seems.' As a matter of fact, man, both in his highest and lowest flights of reasoning, finds it necessary to change his value of 'good' and 'evil.' He cannot, indeed, in strict judgment, separate the one from the other; good being evil and evil good, according to his point of view, his time and place in the world; just as he cannot tell where, in himself, soul begins and body ends, or, in certain sensations, what is pleasure and what is pain. Given a few million

of years between man and his act, and a further removal from his earthly standpoint, and who could say whether the act had been good or evil? 'Roaming in thought over the Universe,' muses Whitman, 'I saw the little that is Good steadily hastening towards immortality, and the vast All that is called Evil I saw hastening to merge itself and become lost and dead.'

Nor need we stumble at the fact that our current conception of Sin has held sway over the mind of man for ages. The judgment of man has been as fixed, and, perhaps, as long time astray in other decisions, and yet he has finally fallen from them on receiving ampler knowledge. Take, for example, the conception of the 'Sky.' In Abraham's days, and, perhaps, long before, it was firmly believed to be solid; sun, moon, and stars passing across it in orderly march, with Yahwé residing above it; angels ascending and descending upon a ladder set up for mutual communication between heaven and earth. Slowly this judgment vanished from the ideas of men. But the conception we *yet* profess as to the sky's concavity is just as untrue. It is not hollow in any sense. The 'Sky' of our idea and faith does not *really* exist at all. Its dome-like appearance and hollowness is sheer illusion, for if all space were seen in the absolute of vision, and as the Eternal Being must see it, the form of our sky-phenomenon would fade away like a spectre. It is entirely the product of defective human judgment. And the long-accepted phenomenon of 'Sin' will, we are convinced, ultimately, as regards

its validity and extent, fall under the same category of semi-spectralities. Just as we may have true relations to space, but none to a 'sky,' so we may have eternal relations to God, and yet have none to that 'sin' which is conceived by man to have an absolute reference. And this assumption seems justified by the fact that a sinless soul and a sinless world are not empty dreams of a speculative fancy. They were fundamental truths in the mind of Jesus, and the high aim of His Doctrine. As night vanishes from before the dawn, so sin will vanish from the world. When we 'go to the Father' we shall not find our sins awaiting us. Jesus Himself claimed to have reached the sinless state. He, a man, lived on this earth in a sinless zone, and urged all men to come within the same sphere, through the knowledge of the Father, and that true relation to Him which had been hid from the beginning of time. He steadfastly disallowed the fallacious conclusion that the validity and extent of sin in the conscience and judgment of men was a correspondence with that in the mind of God. This is, perhaps, the value and practical worth to the world of that new knowledge of the nature and character of the Eternal Being which He announced as His 'Good News.' And, surely, it is a boundless gain to every human soul when every one finds, like the prodigal son, that however 'sin' may weigh on his own conscience, and fume in the judgments of his elder brothers, it is not to be found in any form in the mind of the loving, embracing Father. The shadow of sin, like the Night-shadow, is found a finite one,

and knows no infinity; and is thus transferred from the heavens to the earth, from God to Man.

We may say, then, that in the mind of Jesus, the Idea of God is a concept which is completely outside of that sphere in which Sin is a presence; and all judgment upon it, either of pardon or of condemnation, is referred only to Himself as Son of man, and to the Earth as its juridical province. The Absolute One whom He calls 'My God' is merely concerned with sin conceptually, through the wholly human and relative idea of the 'Father.' He treats the idea of sin as He treated every other conception which He found imbedded in the religious consciousness of His age, viz. not as a *truth*, but as an *instrument* by which truth might be taught. He always took the stones of the old temples to build His new church. The popular and priestly expectations of a Messiah; the general expectation of a kingdom; the practices of prayer, of fasting, of giving, of marriage, of Sabbath observances, and many others similar, were ideas which He found as befouled earthly vessels, full of enormities; and He left them cleansed, purified, and exalted; overflowing with His wine of truth. 'Sin,' as a conception and a belief, shared in this transformation. It has an undoubted reference in His system, but it is to man, to the Son of Man, and not to the Absolute. Nor does He anywhere treat of sin from what is called the standpoint of 'Justice.' As we shall try to show, His judgments upon sin have no analogy in our conceptions of 'Justice,' any more than His throne of Decision

has any likeness to our Law Court. When all sin has been forgiven by man to men on Earth, man will find that there is no charge against any man in heaven before the Father, to be blotted out. The Father truly has ever been cognisant of His Child's separation from Himself, and as one 'lost' and 'dead,' but He has never homologated the charge of sin against Himself with which His Child has been overwhelmed. That charge has been hurled by man against man, but never by the Father. The whole tenor of Jesus' teaching sustains the weird revelation that long after the Father is seen and known to have nothing against any man, man himself is still found to fill the world with his cries of injustice, and to hurl vindictive charges of guilt against his brother. Man, not God, charges man with 'sin.' No fact in the Testimony of Jesus is more substantial and important.

And if it should yet be said that Jesus, in the Last Judgment, is acting as God, and is God, and that, therefore, all sin is still thereby referred to God, we should wish to point out how careful Jesus is, in His words, to exclude *divinity* from Himself in such an hour of judgment, by constantly levelling Himself down to the *human* status. From His throne, enveloped with the glory of the Father, He the 'Son of Man' yet says that even 'these least' are His *Brethren*. 'Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these *My brethren*, these least, ye did it unto Me' (Matt. xxv. 40). This is a Human Voice. Jesus is not on the throne of judgment as God, when He judges

sin, but as man, and the Son of Man. This Power is on the Earth.

Experience, indeed, teaches us that the forgiveness of man is, after all, the only real and true forgiveness felt in the heart. To ask the forgiveness of God is comparatively an easy sacrifice, but it is quite a different thing when we come to ask the forgiveness of a man. Then we realize what the sacrifice of humility means. Then the fires of remorse prove to us their power over nerve and feeling. Indeed, if man had never known the forgiveness of man, the forgiveness of God could not have been imputed to Him or even conceived. And on the other hand, when man has tasted of the human reconciliation, it becomes easy to assume the forgiveness of the Deity.

Jesus, having thus exhausted the possibilities of the ancient Moral Ideals of mankind to make man perfect, and having proved a capacity in man to be still more perfect than these were able to make him (Mark x. 17-22), had of necessity to give mankind a new Moral Ideal. This Ideal was Himself. It necessarily rose out of the new Life. His Order is always, First, the new birth, and Second, the new ethic. 'Be born again,' then 'Come, follow Me.' Thereby He also changed the view-point of perfected human life from the heavens to the earth. He brought down the Ideally Perfect Life out of the so-called supernaturally vague and vast, and visualized it to all eyes in His own human form.

The new Ideal He formulated in the words, 'Love one another as I have loved you' (John

xiii. 34). He Himself had lived it, even as the Father had lived it, and hence it was a living Ideal, and all men could henceforth live it. The world had never known this as a possible reality heretofore. So palpable was it to be to the world, that men were to have it before them as evidence to their *senses* as to the truth of the religion of Jesus. 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.' 'Not even now could it be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete, than to endeavour so to live that Christ would approve our life' (J. S. Mill, *Three Essays on Theism*, p. 255).

CHAPTER XI

a. CONSCIENCE. *b.* JUSTICE

WE seem to be called upon, at this part of our subject, to attempt to answer the questions, (*a*) If sin has no real reference beyond earth and humanity, why is a consciousness of sin against some One unseen so universal? and (*b*) What becomes of 'Justice' in the religion of Jesus?

a. A consciousness of sin, or more precisely, 'conscience,' may be considered, perhaps, (1) in its universal or natural form; (2) in its particular or positive form as referring to some 'Law,' moral, parental, national, and such like; and (3) as resting solely on the Person of Jesus and the ideal of His life.

1. A consciousness of error, mistake, shortcoming, or 'sin,' is, in all men, either as embryonic or more or less developed, an experiential fact. It is what is known as a 'conscience.' Even in the lowest types of men, it is, we are assured, often vividly and actively present. Our own personal convictions, indeed, carry us much further than the human limitation, for we believe with many that a 'conscience,' that is, a something which

'judges' of right and wrong, extends also to the animal creation. 'It is impossible, indeed,' says Lecky (*Map of Life*, p. 79, 1901), 'with the knowledge we now possess, to deny to animals some measure both of reason and of the moral sense.' 'We find among some animals undoubted signs of remorse, gratitude, affection, self-sacrifice.' Darwin, also, thought it 'in a high degree probable,' 'that any animal whatever, endowed with well-marked social instincts, the parental and filial affections being here included, would inevitably acquire a moral sense or conscience as soon as its intellectual powers had become as well, or nearly as well, developed as in man' (*Descent*, p. 149, 1901, Murray). In the form of what may be called 'instinct,' 'disposition,' or 'temperament,' it seems to be dimly conceivable even beyond the animal world. It is certainly not the exclusive possession of the human bosom. It has, therefore, nothing primarily to do with what we understand by 'religion.' Its existence is beyond controversy, but its character as divine or infallible is, perhaps, not so well guaranteed. There is in conscience somewhat of instinct, and instinct may be, as it is often supposed to be, an inherited experience of progenitors.

'Conscience,' or a consciousness of right and wrong, does, in the course of time, dominate human life and conduct, under the inspirations and impulses of 'religion,' but, primarily, both in man and beast, *a consciousness of what is right and of what is wrong, springs immediately out of the precedent consciousness of Life.* 'Life being the

root at once of our rights and obligations, the knowledge that life is a fact must of necessity be the first step in the science of jurisprudence, as of every other branch of the science of man' (*Institutes of Law*, p. 55, 2nd Ed. Prof. Lorimer). The individual consciousness of life overshadows every sphere of the individual activities. It biasses all thought, and intensifies all feeling, and is the chief factor in the highest passions. 'Conscience' thus comes to possess what Benjamin Kidd terms 'a super-rational sanction' (*Social Evolution*, p. 112), that is, as we understand it, the sanction of life. For all life lies above and precedes both reason and judgment. But while this super-rational sanction is necessary to a 'conscience,' it does not appear that a 'supernatural' sanction is also essential. A distinction of the two things is important. For while this consciousness of having personality-in-life is undoubtedly the matrix of all human notions which evolve and develop into systems of morality, and moreover, is the grand passion behind all religion of any name, the so-called 'supernatural' sanction of human conduct is often a mere terror of the mind, a wisp of superstition, a panic devotion which in all ages has been blindly granted to every object of possible worship under heaven.

The evolution of a human 'conscience' from this all-pervading consciousness of personality-in-life is traceable through a development of this consciousness of self to a consciousness of the possession of self. This may be said to mark the natural, as distinguished from the intellectual

development of a 'moral' of human life. The conscious 'I live,' develops intuitively into 'Life is mine,' or 'Life belongs to me.' We have, first, an expression of Self-assertion, and then of Possession of Self. The conscious Self emerges and passes over from the passive into the active state, and claims itself. Thence an obligation to Self rises naturally out of this claim upon Self, and, 'I owe it to my life' becomes intuitively a directive power in maintaining and preserving life. Whatever is then beneficial for, or detrimental to this Self, or personal life, will henceforth be reckoned either 'right' or 'wrong.' Personality has then entered upon morality or a way of Life. The personality-in-life, or Self, becomes the centre of its All, and moves instinct and desire, appetite and volition, thought and feeling, around itself and in behalf of itself.

A distinct consciousness of good and evil (which also involves happiness or pleasure), as well as of right and wrong (which does not), is thus evolved both in man and beast, out of the natural and spontaneous, but not as yet intelligent claim of the individual to own and maintain its independent existence. What ministers to its well-being is held as being the 'right,' and what detracts from that well-being is inevitably regarded as the 'wrong.' Life, considered as a Self, forms the original and only basis for a guide in good and evil, right and wrong, and is the primary test which is applied and practised by every living thing. Man, indeed, rises to other levels than those of the animal, but he only does so with a higher development of life,

and so, of the conscious Self; but in his early stages of animality and pre-savagedom, the vital Self is the true and only 'moral' of his being.

Another factor, however, enters into the completion of the human 'conscience,' as we are accustomed to consider it, for in all men its relatedness to what is beyond Self is as fully attested as is its relatedness to that which is within. The personality-in-life discovers itself in a universe of other personalities. Everywhere creation is seen teeming with 'principalities and powers' which are both advantageous and disadvantageous to the particular Self. The person claiming life as his own awakens to an intelligent consciousness that life can be taken from him, even as it has been given. And so through this intelligence another fundamental but rationalizing principle emerges which antagonizes and overthrows the primary, or irrationalized natural one which claims life as its 'own.' 'I am my own' is then admitted to be a falsity, and so also is the whole system of claims, and of 'rights' and 'wrongs,' which springs from its root. The new principle asserts 'My life is not my own. It has been given to me. It is the gift to me of Another.'

The Self then abandons all claim to its self. There is a sacrifice made of self, and, perhaps, it is here where we should note the ascent of man above the animal. For although the animal also sacrifices itself for its young, this perhaps cannot be termed so definitely as in man, an *intelligent* sacrifice.

But with the coming of this consciousness, what

we understand as 'religion' may be said to begin. *It is a conscious relatedness to another as the source of our Self or life.* The animal perhaps never advances beyond the consciousness that the source of life is its self. Hence life in it carries no consciousness of obligation to another, although there is a sense of relatedness to another as well as in man.

It does not necessarily follow, however, that this consciousness in man of obligation to another must mean consciousness of obligation to a God. In genuine experiential truth this obligation is carried no further at first than to the person who is believed to be the parent, and usually to the mother as the supposed Life-source. Before this Other, the first real devotions of 'religion' are made; and as true sacrifices are then rendered, as afterwards are given to the Most High. The parent becomes all the 'God' there can be in the circumstances. The mark of change is the mark of new life, or life acknowledged as poured from a new source, the Other; and it is through this consciousness of new *relationship* of life that the *obligations* to the Self are dethroned and the obligations to the Other established in their place. Morality then draws its 'power' or authority, or dynamic, from a source without its self, and not from within. The test of good and evil, right and wrong, is no longer what Self decides, but what is believed to be the wish or will of the Other. Life then carries in it the highest value, and its real possessor or Fountainhead being acknowledged as not the Self, but the other One, all obligation is carried

over to the Other, as to one to whom all is due. The other is thus acknowledged to possess all claim from being the fountain and author of the life held by the personality or Self.

A 'conscience' which draws its force from beyond the conscious personality is thus formulated together with that other which feels its spur from within, and henceforth, human life and conduct vibrate upon these two principles of obligation, viz. Obligation to Self, and Obligation to the other self (who in the highest expansion of consciousness is ultimately carried into the Unseen and termed 'God'), or, generally, upon the Authority drawn from within, and the Authority imposed from without, the personality-in-life.

Without minutely analysing human consciousness, as related to a 'conscience' governing our life and conduct, we venture to affirm that these two principles of authority will be found to blend in all human character, viz. a Consciousness of personal life claimed as one's own, and so referring to Self, and through Self to all Humanity; and a Consciousness of this same life as not one's own, but as really belonging to Another; and, thereby, referring to the giver of life, the parent, or, in its final form, to the Deity. All human laws are based on the first, and 'divine' laws on the second.

In the long course of the development of man, from the stage of mere animality upwards, all instinct, appetite, desire, feeling and thought, are found biassed throughout by these two Imperatives. The fully developed 'conscience' 'I ought,' has not merely a single, but a dual reference,

corresponding to the predominance, in passion or action, of that consciousness of personality-in-life which aggressively asserts 'I am mine,' or, on the other hand, submissively confesses 'I am His.' In the very nature of things all definitions of what is ethical, or pertaining to human conduct as 'right' or 'wrong,' finally mould themselves upon these. Clearly, we cannot have a conception of our 'rights' or 'wrongs' until we have a consciousness or 'conscience' of what is to be held as right and wrong, and this 'conscience' must find both its birth and developmental authority in a consciousness of that life which is deemed as a possession from either one's self as its origin, or from another on whom the Self is dependent for both life and personality. *Consciousness of life* is the root of unity from which all the branches of 'conscience,' which diverge into 'good' and 'evil,' 'right' and 'wrong,' ultimately ascend and have final determination.

It is, however, through the lacks of life that we become conscious of life. We only know life through its needs. And it is the *need* which always gives vitality and intensity to the 'conscience' of right or wrong. Indeed, Hunger, in its widest sense, is at bottom the great revealer, and, fundamentally, the sole director of life,—the hunger of appetite, of desire, of thought, or of feeling; or of what is realizable by stomach, blood, brain, and heart. Hunger is the true cry of life, testifying to the double consciousness, (1) of life possessed, and (2) of a lack demanded by life.

This consciousness of need, or lack, resolves itself

into a need, not of self, but of the other, or of what lies outside of self. This widens to a need of man, and, again, to a need of 'God,' which ultimately is in this case simply an expression for the All. Carlyle quaintly illustrated this feature of the Self by showing that if a shoebblack got half the Universe he would still hunger for the other half. The Self thus reveals by its hunger a capacity for the infinite. And the hunger for the infinite begets the 'right' to possess it. When, therefore, life puts forth its tentacles, its suckers, its various mouths, feeders, or lips, to satisfy this lack, or an item of this lack, it at the same time embodies in the act a consciousness, or instinct, or intuition, that life is owned for Self, and maintains the 'right' to satisfy hunger to the infinity of its need. The cry is for more life, to obtain it, to absorb it, and to be at one with it, whether it be found in bread, blood, feeling, thought, creature or deity, earth, air, or the elements generally. Life can only live by life, and therefore life must take life. Life's fountainhead lies beyond Self, and, in seeking this and finding it, Self finds also the 'Good,' the 'Right,' the 'Deity,' and the appeasement of all its hungers. In the highest expression this means rest, and eternal life.

This being the universal course of life, we are not surprised to find the codes of 'moral law' of all peoples in all ages, dealing first with the lacks of life. Killing, Adultery, Fornication, Stealing, Coveting, and such like, are all growths from a precedent lack or hunger in human life which seeks satisfaction. The higher hungers embodied

in Love to God, Love to Parents, and the duties pertaining to these, emerge later into the historical arena with the knowledge of God and the Parent. In the lowest and earliest forms of life, these acts of killing, stealing, and of rapine and ravaging generally, cannot be and never are regarded as 'wrongs.' Each being assumes itself to be an independence among all things, and its lacks as the legitimate channels for the sacrifice of all things needful to maintain its being. It does not create this assumption. It is given with life. It comes from the source of life. And the 'lower' the life in the scale of being, the more intense seems this self-gratification, and the exclusion of all else from the Self or individuality.

But as life rises higher through more life, the existence of others, and the lacks in the lives of others, are acknowledged, and then, but not till then, the individual or particular Self acquires the power over itself to restrain and even sacrifice its self proportionally, on the other's behalf. This power is begotten and evolved through the Self giving life out of itself to another, or in 'laying down life' in a new personality, the offspring. For there is a first hunger, and, perhaps the most imperative of all, for the other one, of one's own image and one's own life. In such a sacrifice there first dawns the possibility of a true relationship with another which may have other ends in view than satisfying one's Self. It is indeed the primal form of all sacrifice, and must have been the original form of finitude taken upon Himself by the Eternal.

Apart from this realization of the Self in the Other, there necessarily could have been no possible mode of conduct, or 'morality,' between either God and man, or man and man. It is the path of life that makes all other paths possible. And this initial sacrifice of life 'laid down' in the offspring,—a true hereditation from the Father-of-all—contains in itself the germs of all degrees of sacrifice, from the most infinitesimal recognition of the other to that full and absolute 'laying down of life' which gives to the other a life eternal. This is, indeed, the complete gift of Self to the other, the divine gift, or as Jesus puts it, the 'I in Thee.'

We now stand here, as compared with our former view, at the further extreme; for whereas life, or the Self, has a capacity for infinity, to absorb all; it also possesses the other capacity to give away all, even life and personality, or all it possesses. And both in the lowest forms of existence, as well as in the highest, it must be evident that the consciousness of right and wrong as governing the actions of both spheres, is based upon the dictations and consciousnesses of the ownership of life. Conscience, at bottom, has no other sanction.

A consciousness of imperfection, or of lack in any sense, is not thus originally due to the presence of the 'God'-idea in the mind of animal or man, nor to the near proximity of a 'Law' or a 'Will,' but purely to the feeling, sense, or intuition of life possessed. Life, through its hungers, directs all actions, either for Self, or for the Other, with a power or force comparable to

that which is wielded by the hammer through the wedge.

The universal consciousness of wrong, error, or, in its full development, 'sin,' is in this way traceable, as a fact of common experience, to a common possession of life, and to common experience of its lacks or hungers, high or low, and the consequent necessity that is felt to act towards satisfying these. But while consciousness of a 'conscience' is universal, *the same 'conscience'* is far from being universal.

2. The universal reference of 'conscience' to the wide basis of personal or individual life comes, later, to centre in particular life as expressed through the narrower circumstances of the nation or the family; the 'laws' of the parent, the clan, the tribe, or the community in general.

Under any circumstances, the earliest 'conscience' developed in the history of the human race must of necessity be *a conscience toward man*. The personality is from the beginning instinctively made the reference of good and evil, of right and wrong; the driving power behind all being the consciousness of life. But as life still develops, this personal standard has others imposed upon it from without. There is first, the parental conception of what is right and wrong. It is observable that this reference of right and wrong is invariably accepted by the child in preference to its own. But it is never done until the obligation of life compels it. The personal life is then realized as *depending* on the parent, in some way, and when life is no longer regarded as

independent, or as originating in Self, the independent personal standard of right and wrong based upon it, and assumed from the dawn of existence, is deposed in favour of that one which is associated with the giver and guardian of life. The source of life, or of the personal self, is then believed to be not in self, but in the other self, who is deemed to be the parent; and the reference of what is to be held as right and wrong is, under the 'power' of that conviction, admitted to the higher place of moral imperative. The parental 'conscience' becomes that of the child, through the coercion which the considerations of life impose. The unconscious postulate of independent being which declares 'I am my own' is abandoned and sacrificed for the correlating and wider truth 'I am his.' The ethical authority is then seen following the path of life to its further source and imperative, as in the beginning of personal experience. Centrality of moral control is rooted out from Self and surrendered to the Other, the parent, and henceforth so long as this self-sacrifice is maintained, 'Not *My* will, but *Thine* be done,' is the moral law to the personality.

But the parental standard of right and wrong is, in turn, itself derived from an authority above its own. It is the standard which controls the family, the tribe, the nation, the empire, or the age. Power of life reposes in each or all of these sections of humanity, as far as individuals are concerned, and the coercions of life, as far as this power prevails, are in a similar manner paramount over the sectional 'conscience.' The civic or the

political aggregate of man retains quite a distinct sense of what is wrong and right; and it may happen that the 'conscience' of the family, or of the nation, may not coincide with that which is acted on by the neighbouring family or nation. But these several sections, again, conscious that the sources of existence are not with them, but with the unknown Source of all life, believe that they are under the coercions of the highest Life, and see *in everything that maintains their existence* a proof of good, and, *in all that acts adversely*, a criterion of evil. In every instance, it is the force inherent in the consciousness of life which creates the ethic of life. First, in the child, and in all living things, as holding life from and for the independent self; then, correlatively, in the parent as the realized fountain of one's life; afterwards in the community as wielding the powers of life and death over all its units; which again refers all life-sources to some Unseen Being. That is to say, it is always Life which creates and determines on its own behalf what the course of Life ought to be. It is from itself that the guiding or directing principle of life emerges.

Historically, 'moral law' is never brought to birth until the wants of life, personal or civic, demand it. National life is developed before Codes of laws, moral or political, are formulated. The Mosaic 'Laws,' for example, arose because of the demands of the Hebrew national life, but not before then. Personal morality must have existed previously, but of shallower vitality, cruder form, blunter incidence, and with a narrower

sphere of application. A cruder and earlier life required no other. But humanity in its advancement felt the tidal inflow of deeper life, and with it came that fuller moral law which carried a greater sufficiency of sanction, and a more clearly defined sphere of the moral 'conscience' as it affected the act of man to man, and the attitude of all men to God. Moral Laws do not give new life. It is the new life which gives the new moral law. This is the attitude assumed by Jesus. He was 'The Life,' but He was also 'The Way.' He is both the Substantive Energy connected with life, and likewise its Directive Principle. But primarily, He comes first that men may have life, not merely Guidance. This follows subsequently.

In the savage state, and in the pre-savage state, man is not conscious of life demanding more than its own, that is, *the ^{an} that individual life demands by its lacks*. The 'thine' conception is not yet admitted. Jesus transcends these earlier as well as later 'moralities' by declaring that what belongs to the Other is all the personal Self has to give, even to life itself. What is 'right' absolutely is not based on 'Justice,' but on Love. The expansion of life, as He gives it, demands and gives this new morality. The highest life, widening from the animal upwards, at every stage of its progress, does in this way determine the imperative which is to control its actions. In the course of the ages it rises through animality to the child, and from the child to the man, and again from the man to the Ideal Man. Every mode of conduct, character, or moral living, is thus revealed

through man to man, and without exception it is *the highest conscious life which becomes the true moral law to all other lives*. 'Conscience' never, in our experience, rises above this reference to life. But as the highest conscious life of our experience is that which is found in the life of Man, it is evident that a 'conscience' must always rest on a personality, and on whatever life-force that personality, for the time being, may be able to wield. And in order to become a moral law to the world the Personality must be on the earth.

3. The conception of a 'conscience' as finding its birth in every life as a principle, and its propulsions in the highest human Life, as an objective 'Law,' leads us naturally to the Personality who has fulfilled these conditions in His person, practice, and principles. Jesus has undoubtedly become the absolute 'Conscience' for the world. There is no higher standard of conduct and character conceivable to the human mind than is erected in His Personality, because there is no higher life conceivable. Out of His life, and His gift of life, springs that 'categorical imperative' for all human direction, which is being slowly yet surely taken up into the world's life and conscience as its ultimate. It is the true point of divine incidence upon the life and will of man. And it comes into man's experience through living, even as it is given to all through, His life. It is no mere milestone catalogue of 'duties' and moral inculcations set up on the highway of human existence, which 'no mere man since the Fall' is

able perfectly to keep. His life is there, and in His life is the perfection which all the good and great in all ages have desired to see in actual human embodiment as vital, real, eternal.

But as we have tried to show, Jesus refuses to claim the fountainhead of this Imperative as being in Himself. His own conduct and character He tests by a higher life than His own. And it is in this higher Life He found His 'conscience.' He appeals to His Father. 'I do nothing of Myself, but as the Father taught Me' (John viii. 28). For example, He was firm in His 'conscience' that He spoke not lies, but the truth. He reiterates His truthfulness. 'If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true.' 'The Father Himself who hath sent Me hath borne witness of Me.' 'Which of you convicteth Me of sin?' 'If I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?' He is conscious that He does what is 'right,' because He reflects in His own life the life of the Father. He walks with the Father. 'He that sent Me is with Me, He hath not left Me alone, for I do always the things that are pleasing to Him' (John viii. 29). Just as the child by the instincts of derived life submits to follow the 'conscience' of the earthly parent, so Jesus, likewise, learned His 'conscience' of good and evil, right and wrong, through the life of the 'Father in heaven.' At no time is He found building upon an arbitrary 'Will' or 'Law.' He obeys a Father, and in that Person confesses the perfect life and the ultimate authority for its perfection.

From the beginning He takes up the position that His life is not His own. 'Wist ye not that I must be in the things of My Father?' He has a 'conscience' because He has consciousness of life, but as He is conscious that He holds life from the Father (John vi. 57), He has 'conscience' towards the Father, and not towards an abstraction, or Ideal of Good-and-Evil, evolved from His 'subliminal' or sub-conscious Self. His life is His own surrendered to the Father who gave it; and it is in this surrender that He confesses Himself a Son, a Child.

Moreover, it is in being a perfect child to a Father, and in preserving that relationship intact, that He finds His 'conscience' perfected, as also His consciousness of having no sin, and of His being in the right absolutely. The child-relationship is the highest possible to any being, and He sets it up in His person, as well as in His practice and principles, as the absolutely perfect standard of human character and conduct. Even as by the child Jesus was guided to an apprehension of the Father-Personality of the Eternal One, so also is it by the Child whom He confesses Himself to be, that He learns from the Father the Perfect Life.

And, in turn, it is constantly on the foundation fact of His giving to men eternal life that He bases His imperative 'Come, follow Me.' Before He can be a Moral Standard to mankind, He must first be their 'Father' in life. Hence His insistence on their becoming as Himself, as a little child, and hence His injunction 'Ye must be born

anew,' and hence also His complaint 'Ye will not come to Me, that ye may have life.'

He comes first and foremost to give eternal life, and to give it abundantly, even the life which He Himself has received from the Father. But this being established in men as the paramount consciousness, a directive imperative or 'conscience' necessarily evolves and develops out of it. Consciousness of right and wrong, or 'conscience,' has its original sanction in the consciousness of life as given by, and again surrendered to Jesus. It is this 'conscience' based on life given, which directed Jesus Himself in all He did, and which has in turn guided the Christian martyr and hero and Christian conduct generally in all past Christian times. There is no higher imperative on earth than that which calls to lay down life, and personality in that life. But only this satisfies the 'conscience' of Jesus. Perhaps we should recognise in the Holy Spirit that new Life and Personality of Jesus consequent on laying down life and personality here, even as Jesus was here the new Life and Personality resultant from the Father's life laid down. We venture to believe that the interests of life alone have also, so far as we know, directed the acts of God Himself. For His ultimate purpose always seems to be 'that ye may have life;' not primarily nor principally that men should be 'righteous' or 'good.'

It is this value which Jesus places upon Life which enables us to understand why our 'conscience' always seems to poise itself on a pedestal of superiority, and from that 'coigne of vantage'

to claim a certain ultra-rational and semi-divine surveillance over all our motions. It rests entirely on the ultra-rational and 'divine' value which we unconsciously place upon life. No one ever reaches a value or estimate of life. We give to it a divine value. It stands outside of measurements. But it is this consciousness which gives force and high authority to 'conscience.' We instinctively feel that nothing we can ever think, or do, or say, can rise level to the worth that we wear with life. All thought, motion, passion, art or action, falls short of this high consciousness.

It is for this reason, that when life has little or no value placed upon it, either in the nation, the locality, or the individual, there is then a corresponding depression and depreciation of the 'conscience' accepted by these bodies. The sense of right and wrong is coarsened and blunted, and, in common phrase, 'the moral tone is low.' When life, and its concomitants, are exalted to their rightful position in the general mind, 'conscience' at once ascends also.

It is not possible to conceive a high morality to exist together with a low value of life. It was by the supreme emphasis and value which Jesus placed upon life that He was enabled to enrich the moral nature of mankind, and to increase the sensibility of the human 'conscience' to a degree never known before Him. For, in sustaining His value of it, men have also realized their noblest duties in maintaining it and cherishing it, both in themselves and others. And in sacrificing it, or laying it down, they have taken that path which ultimately

leads to the 'glory' which Jesus Himself had with the Father before the world was.

It is this forgotten personal element in the moral standard of life which has proved so disastrous to a right understanding of the formation of a perfect 'conscience' in the human heart. No permanence of a 'conscience' is possible until there is a permanent personal life-reference for all possible conduct. And this is given to the world in Jesus alone. References to 'Law,' to a Code of morals, to a 'Will,' to the '*Summum Bonum*,' to 'Self-Love,' to 'Utility,' or to any other theoretical ideal or abstraction, stand apart from a standard personal life. They necessarily vary with the changes of the human race, and have still the added distraction attached to them, that such Perfection of Human Life has never been demonstrated by them in human shape and experience. The Hebrews, for example, appealed to the 'Will' of an Almighty Being, codified in darkness and flames, the Greeks to 'Reason' which was supposed to be shared by gods and men alike, the Romans to a vague 'Justice.' In the Middle Ages, a new 'conscience' gave birth to the 'Seven Deadly Sins,' in reference to a spurious notion that to touch the world at all was to touch 'contamination.' The Christian 'conscience' of to-day still hovers around these consecrated inanimate impersonalities, with the result that the Spiritual Life of Christendom runs restlessly from the one to the other, seeking peace and finding none.

Jesus put down these merciless 'principalities

and powers' from their seat, and exalted Himself in their place, saying, 'I am come in My Father's Name.' The moral world became then centred in Life, in Human Life. And whereas all other ideals of good and evil, right and wrong, had encouraged that obedience which gratifies a higher purity of self for one's own self, and so thereby to die the death of the righteous, Jesus made it forever impossible that any 'conscience' should be perfected except in the sacrifice of self, and of all its desires of such 'righteous' attainments, on behalf of the other, the brother. Man finds his 'rights' and his 'righteousness' in giving them all up in loving surrender for the well-being and salvation of his fellowman. Not to be 'righteous,' as the Hebrew imagined, is the path to the perfection of Jesus, and the perfected 'conscience,' but to be 'good,' as the Father in heaven is alone 'Good.' Live! then 'die to live,' and to take life again. The common judgment of men has never failed to distinguish between the two forms of conscience, 'for scarcely for a *righteous* man will one die, for peradventure for the *good* man some would even dare to die' (Romans v. 7). It is evident that the perfect 'freedom' of the 'conscience' must also coincide ultimately with the freedom of this standard personal life. And, indeed, it is really the greater expansions and perfections of personal life in the modern world which have compelled a corresponding extension of 'freedom of conscience.' Until the one arose, the other was unbegotten. And all such 'freedom' must finally complete itself in knowing that truth which alone

makes men 'free' (John viii. 32), the Truth which is personal as Jesus (John xiv. 6).

A consciousness of sin, therefore, can only be a 'judge' of 'sin' by reference to the highest standard of perfected life, that is to say, to the personality of Jesus. And this standard of what 'Sin' is, lies not in the Deistic Unknown, but in the sphere of humanity. It is in the Son of Man. It is concreted in historical fact on the earth. No doubt, a 'conscience' may be false if it rest upon false or vaguely conceived foundations. 'Sin' may be created by the invention of laws and arbitrary tests of conduct. What is not so certain is that God, the Father of Jesus, counts that thing 'Sin' to us, when the standards, known and received of men, so account it; or that He also endorses as sin what men by general consent accept as 'sin'; or, generally, that the Human and Divine standards of 'sin' rest together on absolute and identical foundations. The child, the man, the community, the nation, and God, may each have a different consciousness of what is 'sin,' and this being the case, the only permanent test for man as to what he is to count 'sin' must be found in the personal, human Jesus.

The Vision of 'Sin' which stands out so vividly in the world's great religious and secular Literatures, mapped and measured by such minds as the Hebrew Writers, Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton, who were the highest embodiments of the 'Sin'-consciousness of their times, is largely a more or less lurid and imaginative projection

thrown by them upon the mind of God from the terrorized 'conscience' of the human soul.

Jesus gives no countenance to a consciousness of 'sin' as being in God, corresponding to the similar consciousness in the mind of Man. Such a consciousness of sin exists only within the area of human limitations, between man and man, and between man and the Son of Man; and as He describes it as originally issuing 'out of the heart of man,' so also He discerns it to take end and final determination in that human sphere where He Himself is an Ultimate. Jesus sees 'Sin' as far as He sees the relationships of humanity, and the course of human life; but so far as man is concerned, these begin and end with Himself. For He gives Life to man, and all judgment has been given to Him, and all sin referred to Him. Any 'conscience' of sin, therefore, apart from or beyond Him, must be deemed a false 'conscience,' the creation of an excited fancy allied to fear.

It is true that Jesus connects the word 'God' with 'commandments' and 'transgression' of these, but He never does so except when speaking to Jews and others regarding the 'God' Yahwé, the God of Moses. Now, He always asserted an authority of His own above what this 'God' had commanded Moses to say. The Sermon on the Mount is nothing if it is not of greater authority than what was 'commanded' by Yahwé to Moses. But it was a part of Jesus' method of teaching to refute His hearers on their own ground, *and from the standpoint of their own accepted authorities.* Nearly all His quotations from the Old Testament

have this end in view only. He appeals to Moses, to the prophets, and to the psalms, instead of to the higher authority of His own word. But He knew that His word was not the highest authority *to them*, and that conviction was attainable in them only by appeals to what they and not He held to be absolute. He was more tactful than say, 'Your God is a false God,' for this would merely have hardened their hearts. But all this conviction is summed up in His prayer 'O righteous Father, *the world knew Thee not*, but I knew Thee;' and it is almost bluntly stated when He declares 'It is *My Father* that glorifieth Me, of whom ye say, that He is your *God*, and ye have not known Him, but I know Him' (John viii. 54-55). Yet they were confident that they knew God, and that their God had spoken to Moses (John ix. 28-29). He disallowed the identity of the two persons, Yahwé and His Father, and set aside the authority of all that comes under the 'commands' of the former Deity, except when He found them helpful for His purposes of instruction.

The case of the young rich man might be given as a random example of this (Mark x. 17-22; Matt. xix. 16-22). Jesus first refers him to keeping the 'commandments' of Yahwé, but when He discovers that the youth has found them inadequate, and still 'lacks,' He immediately supplies the 'lack' and sets His own Word above them. 'Sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven, and come, follow Me.'

But it is clear, that when the authority of a

God is surpassed in this way, the God can no longer be God to any human soul. And as Jesus constantly supersedes the 'commandments' of Yahwé, we feel that we have no other alternative than to regard His attitude to the Hebrew Yahwé as one of denial and deposition. Reference of sin, therefore, to the 'God' of Israel, does not necessarily imply, in the teaching of Jesus, a reference of sin to His God and Father.

b. We can now venture, perhaps, to consider that aspect of 'Justice' which Jesus teaches in His doctrine.

Viewed theoretically, or as an ideal, Justice is a conception of vast convenience in human affairs, but it has never been shown to have that validity which belongs to an absolute. As a working principle in the administration of individual and national concerns, its sanctions seem to exhaust themselves in the Will of the ruler, or the paramount authority which for the time being prevails in the realm where such authority is obeyed. Universally, its origin dawns first in the form of consciousness which declares, 'I am mine.' Without the consciousness of *possession*, as attributed to man or the Deity, Justice could have no *locus* in the thoughts or transactions of humanity. But when once the consciousness of possessing one's self is granted, the notion of Claim arises, and the sphere of Claim becomes for the principle of Justice an area of jurisdiction thenceforth. Possession in something must be conceded before Justice can move.

Further, Justice is rendered inoperative until

there are Two Claimants, either actual or assumed. It holds a balance between two forces. For theological purposes, God is sometimes conceived as establishing a 'law,' which at once begins to make claims on its own account. God Himself might be disposed, for example, to blot out a sin, but this 'law' sets up an inexorable Claim to be 'satisfied;' and until 'justice' is 'satisfied,' and the 'law' possessed of its own, God is helpless to confer absolution of the 'sin.' So long as 'law' in this case is conceived as having independent, or absolute authority, by reason of an absolute possession, the Claim of such a 'law' is also of absolute validity.

Jesus renders it impossible in His system to give to any law, even when it is a law of God, any independent authority. Where He sees 'Will' or 'Law,' He first sees a Person. Such a conception as a 'Law' set up in a Code, or in Creation, wielding power on its own independent initiative, apart from the Father's personality, is not to be found in His teaching. '*Thy will be done,*' '*The will of My Father,*' are His phrases. Even when He formulates His New Commandment, 'Love one another,' He is careful not to separate it either in word or thought from His own Personality. '*As I have loved you.*' In the system of Christian doctrine which has Jesus' authority, therefore, 'Law' or 'Will' cannot be an independent claimant apart from God's personality as Father. Justice, consequently, has no validity on such a basis.

But Man also claims to possess himself. On

the ground of this possession he founds his 'rights.' He calls them the 'rights of man.' And if these 'rights' were fixed in an independent possession they would be irreducible and invulnerable. But before the Father-God, according to Jesus, Man possesses nothing, not even life. He is not *his own* in any sense, for what he holds for his 'own' is the absolute possession of the Father. Even Jesus declares 'I live by the Father.' Man, therefore, before God, has no claim absolutely, and Justice is thus, as an absolute, put outside of all dealings with an Absolute Being. It has no sphere. For in the realm which lies between man and God, human possession in anything absolute does not exist. Consequently the notions of 'Mine' and 'Thine,' on this plane, have to be counted as arbitrary assumptions, and temporary conveniences of that conventional life which moves in a limited state of mortal existence. God alone, in the system of Jesus, can claim, or have 'rights.'

The sole possible claimant of all things is the Father, the Fount of All. But, according to Jesus, *the Father makes no claim*. On a basis of what we understand as 'Justice,' God the Father demands nothing. He is represented as intreating His child, and soliciting His obedience, but never as seeking 'Justice.' Nay, He is heard renouncing all Claim by first denuding Himself of all possession. The Father is held by Jesus as having given all things to Himself. 'All things that are Mine are Thine, and Thine are Mine' (John xvii. 10); a matter not to be regarded as so wonderful,

seeing that even an earthly father could say to his son, 'All that is mine is thine' (Luke xv. 31). Instead of demanding His own as by right, the Father gives all away to His Child in love, all, even to the gift of His only-begotten Son.

And where no possession is asserted on the part of either God or Man, it is clear that there can be no formulation of Claim, and 'Justice' can have no sphere of operation. As a matter of religious fact, *Jesus does not reveal any other principle or passion except Love, as filling the zone between Man and the Eternal Father.* What 'Justice' is left in Jesus' teaching, and in the sum of His doctrine, is seen moving entirely in the sphere of the contingent; and all claims, decisions, rights, and possible administrations of 'law,' circle round His own person, as the Son of Man. It would be rash to suppose that any analogy or any identity could be established between the 'justice' of Jesus and the 'Justice' of our ordinary Law-Courts.

No doubt, there is necessarily a fleeting conception in human relations of something that passes under the name of 'Justice;' but it really resolves itself into notions of what is 'fair;' and the ultimate appeal as to its validity is found in the general ideas of the universal mind, helped to decisions by Judges and Juries as to what this 'fair play' must be. There is no fixed standard, and what there is, fluctuates from age to age. Hobbes, for example, with the advantage of the accumulated wisdom of Hebrews, Greeks, and Romans behind him, not to speak of the juris-

prudence of preceding Christian centuries, is able to define Justice as 'Performance of covenant, and giving to every man his own' (*Leviathan*, iv. 26). Hume declared that the origin of Justice was found solely in what was generally considered to be best for society (see *Essays*, 'Of Justice'). Carlyle defines it as 'Conformity to what the Maker has seen good to make' (*Past and Present*, p. 104, Chapman & Hall).

Many others might be quoted, but in general they all land us in the immeasurable vague. For what really is a man's *own*? And what actually is *best* for society? And again, what particular thing is it that God has made which we are to set up as our *standard* of Justice? 'Understandings' and 'Arrangements,' in a vague way, there may be, throughout all ages, but an absolute standard of Justice, either for time or for eternity, does not appear to have been considered necessary by the Almighty, to the permanent well-being of His creatures. 'On what,' asks Pascal, 'shall man found the economy of the world which he would fain govern? If on the caprice of each man, all is confusion. If on Justice, man is ignorant of it' (*The Thoughts*). Herbert Spencer found 'that justice is not differentiated in thought from Altruism in general.' Do unto others as ye would that others should do unto you, he believed to be 'an injunction which merges generosity and justice in one.' But as this Golden Rule rises no higher than man, the source of 'justice' in this case also can only be assigned to the sphere of the temporary.

God, according to Jesus, has never governed His world, or His Universe, on such a principle. By Love, by endless and inexhaustible beneficence; by a Father's tender grace and infinite solicitude; by gifts unrestrained and unlimited; by suffering and longsuffering, He has manifested Himself at all times, but by Justice, or appeals to Justice,—Never. As the world understands that word, Jesus nowhere teaches it as a Method of the Father in heaven.

Again and again He lifts up the conceptions of so-called 'Justice' which were entertained by His generation, only to reveal their insufficiency and unreasonableness. For example, the men sent into the vineyard at different hours of the day, receiving equal wages of one penny each at night, affords us an instance. 'How unjust to give equal wages for unequal work!' is the indignant thought of the multitude of workers. 'A Penny to these last as well as to us!' Clearly, unjust, by all accepted standards of equity. Yet the reply, 'Is thine eye evil because I am good?' is sufficient to declare that 'Justice' as a principle had never been dreamed of in settling the relations between these labourers and the 'lord of the vineyard' (Matt. xx. 1-16).

No question of 'right' is ever admitted by Jesus where God and man are concerned. Only the *Goodness* of God is admissible. He gives to all, the all they have, not because they have 'rights,' or 'claims,' in justice, but because out of His own inherent goodness, He would love and bless, would give vineyard labour, health, strength, wage, and

all, to all without exception. Was not He their Father?

Another conspicuous instance is found in the parable of the Prodigal Son. The elder brother keeps his father's commandments, and his 'conscience' permits him to boast that he has never transgressed them at any time. His erring brother breaks every one. Both return to the father's house, and the elder son is disgusted at the glaring lack of 'justice' in the father's treatment of them. The prodigal is feasted and made the centre of a carnival of joy, while he who has walked so uprightly is left to come home without the father's greeting and embraces. He feels in his 'conscience' that he does well to be angry. So much given to the undeserving, and never a kid to one's upright self, towards regalement of friends!

The absurdity and impossibility of his position as a son and a brother is made evident enough in the good father's statements. He has never even dreamed of weighing either of his sons or their works in the scales of 'Justice.' He is their father. That is the sum of all relationship, and necessarily lifts his actions towards them above so-called 'law' and justice. He, as a father, levels his actions towards them to the highest plane of his possibilities as a father. His actions and words are as much above Mercy as mercy is above justice, for to be merciful is to connote law, and law broken, but no acknowledgment of law, or guilt, is even hinted at by the Father. He loves his sons and receives them in love. But there is no hint of the need of mercy, and still less of

justice. Love never connotes mercy, for it does not connote law, and, according to the teaching of Jesus, the Father does not act 'mercifully' to the two sons. He acts in love.

The distinction is all-important, because many writers have confused mercy with love, and have found the *merciful* to be identical with the *just*. 'Mercy and justice are one and the same thing,' says Erskine of Linlathen, and argues that when God is visiting the severest justice upon men He is really doing the most merciful thing to them (*Spiritual Order*). This leads Prof. Lorimer to say in his able work, *Institutes of Law*, p. 336, 2nd Ed., 'Human pardon, mercy, charity, and, to sum up all, virtue in every form, must be contented to keep within the pale of the most rigid justice.'

The teaching of Jesus is fundamentally at variance with these conceptions. The father is not merely 'merciful.' He does not assume that the prodigal is requiring mercy, for he does not in any shape or form imply that his son is *guilty*. The grand truth underlying and suffusing the teaching of Jesus is that God the Father likewise has never at any time received into His mind the sin of His child, Man, or accepted him as guilty. He deals with him as His son, but never as a sinner.

Hence His reception of both brothers, the righteous and the unrighteous, is governed by a principle which moves lofty and free above and beyond all considerations of what *they* have either done, or left undone. He acts out of the innate

impulses of His own eternal nature, and the imperishable relationship of life which constitutes them His children, and He leaves *their* conduct completely outside of Himself as determinants of His decisions. He is hampered in no way whatever in His reception of them, by what they have been, or done; and so to the one who declares himself guilty, He ascribes no guilt, and to the other who complains of His parsimony, He vouches to have given His All. 'Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him,' are neither the words of justice nor of mercy, but of love; they insinuate neither law broken nor pardon required; and 'Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that is Mine is Thine,' are not words which imply claim, or right, or a need to preserve an even balance in justice, but show only a Father's love and an eternal sacrifice.

It is, indeed, this word 'Sacrifice' which is the key to the problem. *For the spirit of 'Justice' necessarily knows no sacrifice.* No conceivable concept of Justice includes the idea of sacrifice within its scope and meaning. Justice decides what is claimed and what is 'due,' and what is 'right'; *it determines the even balance;* but to sacrifice is not within its province. But this is the very kernel of Jesus' teaching, and the central principle of His religion. Without the idea of sacrifice His system falls to the ground. He has never taught that man should be 'just.' He has never represented God as being 'just,' or as acting 'justly.' God is 'Good.' 'God so loves the world.' But these are inconceivable attributes

except as connotations of sacrifice. Fatherhood, by its very nature, is all a giving away of life, and breath, and all things. Fatherhood assumes in Jesus' doctrine that all that is belongs to the other one, although that other one can claim nothing. All belongs to the Father; but in love, the absolute imperative, the Father declares 'All that is Mine is Thine.'

It is this Spirit of Sacrifice which Jesus upholds as the One and Absolute Spirit which has ever ruled and is yet ruling this Universe. And the sacrifice is to give life, never to blot out sin. It is also because the Father so acts that Jesus deems it reasonable that all men should do likewise, and so be perfect in the sacrifices of love, even as the Father is perfect. To be 'just' to one another, to keep our own and yield what is due by right to the other, are not precepts of Jesus. He asks us to believe that what is due from us to the other is everything; that all we have, life, and all, belongs to the other, and that not merely because it is the other's as of 'right,' but because being ours in gift from the Father, we have in turn given it all away to the other, in the true self-sacrificing spirit of the Father. We 'Die' to everything. All is given up in love, as the Eternal, from the beginning, gave up all to His child in Fatherhood, and even as Jesus, in doing the will of the Father, and sustaining the Father's work, gave up all He was to the World.

God gave His Son in love, because He had first given Himself in Fatherhood to the Universe. There is nothing that is the Father's that is not

given to man. This is His unspeakable love. It is also His eternal sacrifice.

It is consequently futile to imagine that the world could have been saved by 'satisfying justice.' 'Salvation' depends on sacrifice, but it must be an experienced sacrifice, and not merely a believed sacrifice. It is not enough that we believe in the sacrifice of another. Jesus teaches that our salvation rests on individual sacrifice. Each person must sacrifice, as the Eternal Being has done, before he can be like the Father. He must give; give life; give all. The Eternal One sacrificed Himself in Fatherhood for His child, and all must likewise sacrifice themselves for one another. It is, perhaps, the one stupendously glorious 'Law' of the Universe. For there is no 'law' known to us but seems to 'work' for the benefit of some thing other than itself.

We humbly submit, therefore, that 'Justice,' as a concept usually held by the best thinkers, and in general use in mundane affairs, is not included in the teaching of Jesus. It is not, therefore, 'eternal,' and must pass away. When God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven, justice will not be found to exist. All 'duty' as taught by Him springs from other imperatives outside of, and far above all 'Law' and 'Justice.' 'Love one another, even as I have loved you' (John xv. 12), is not only the highest idealization of human life, but it is an ultimate measure of human conduct which renders the methods of 'justice' for that purpose wholly nugatory and inefficient.

Justice, by its nature, deprives human life of

that enthusiasm which is the first element in heroic work, and drugs the passions which urge pathways through the mystery and darkness which everywhere surround the onward course of mankind; whereas, the natural imperatives of love, under the regulation of the example of Jesus, guarantee all possible progress in thought and action as leading finally to the perfection of the Father in man, and, consequently, to the apotheosis of man. In fundamental principle, perhaps, the spirit of Love is *opposed* to the spirit of justice. For 'Love seeketh not its own—taketh no account of evil' (1 Cor. xiii. 5), but it is of the very essence of Justice to both seek its own and to take account of evil to the uttermost.

CHAPTER XII

THEORY OF THE ATONEMENT

THE principles set forth in the preceding chapters can now be applied to the interpretation of those passages in the Four Gospels which have been so long regarded as 'Proofs' for upholding the theory of the Atonement maintained by the great Creeds of Christendom.

The passages which seem to treat of a Blood-Atonement for sin are few. In actual fact, they are not sin-references at all, but in every case have a reference only to Life, and it will be seen that when Jesus utters them (and we are dealing with His utterances only), the connotations of Life are alone in His mind. Their signification is thereby enhanced, and their profound bearing on a true conception of His 'Gospel' is rendered precious to the human soul in the highest degree. Their meaning, certainly, cannot at this time of day be construed as in any sense identical with or as even approximating to the view of certain theological 'plans' for vindicating or 'satisfying justice.' Jesus never, for example, asserts that He has come to be a 'curse for sin,' or to be 'made sin' in any sense. He never proclaims

that He will die for sin, or bear the punishment 'due to us for sin,' either in this world or in the next. He never designates Himself as the 'Lamb of God' who takes away the sins of the world. All this theology springs from the view of His Person, and of the nature of His work, which was conceived and sustained by John the Baptist, the Apostles, the Fathers, the Reformers, and the Church generally. Strictly, although this theology is Christian, it is not of Jesus. It is in origin and character Jewish. We hear in these voices the opinions of the great crowd which follows Him, but His own voice is not heard.

He charges Himself with the purpose to reveal the Father, to declare His Name: His love: His life: His home: His truth: but He says nothing about His Father's demand to have His Law 'satisfied,' or His determination to exact from anyone a penal reparation for His broken 'Law.' This theology we must regard as having been imported from the Hebrews, and as being, at bottom, essentially heathen in its ancestry.

The cardinal error in it is, of course, based in the false conception of the Eternal God which was taken over from the Hebrews by the followers of Jesus, and moulded into aggressive dogmas, through the Christian Era, by the influential geniuses of the Church. The Father-Nature of God, as Jesus revealed it, has counted for almost zero in the creation of Christian Belief.

But the Father-Nature of God is the all-important factor in the teaching of Jesus, and its omission, as the matrix of His doctrine, necessi-

tates a complete revision of the entire body of 'what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.' This we venture to think is the task that is laid upon the followers of Jesus in the present day.

Now, apart from this misconception of the nature and character of God, the secondary stumbling-block in the way of believing that the Father-God has nothing against man, and never has had, arises from the human consciousness of having sinned against, and of requiring forgiveness from God. Because all have an innate desire to pray for the obliteration of sin, and most becomingly so, it has been rashly assumed that the Father-God has the same condemnation of sin in His mind, and has in no wise forgiven sin. This consciousness of sin is held to be in man because it is first in God. This, of course, was the exact position of the prodigal son. He acted and felt in all ways as if he believed the father to have the same consciousness of, and condemnation of his sin as he had himself. It was only his closer knowledge of his father's mind that revealed to him that no such consciousness, and no such condemnation existed. The father's mind was filled with love and joy; and sin, or judgment of sin, was nowhere in its content. The son simply did not 'know the father,' any more than the world has known the Father in heaven (John xvii. 25). Universal Man, after his manner, has imputed his mind to God. He has emptied his thoughts into God's mind, and then maintained that God thought of him as he thought of himself!

There is indeed much to attract the human sympathies to a system of salvation which affords the moving spectacle of one innocent and immaculate human soul coming between an angry God and a spirit in despair, and receiving into His own breast the furious thunderbolt which that despairing spirit believed was intended for itself. Such a system also can be comprehended by the most obtuse, and it can never fail to have the full support of those barbaric instincts of 'justice and judgment' which have stirred and controlled the actions of men in all times. Throughout the far course of human history, men have themselves practised this system of blood-purchase in obtaining 'satisfaction' and 'justice' for wrong done to them. The conception of 'satisfaction' for sin, given through the shedding of blood, or through some such form of expiation, approaches human acceptance and conviction along the line of least resistance.

Moreover, deep in every soul abides an instinctive craving to be free, to have the breadth of the universe between itself and the slightest shackle of blame; and a 'plan' which effects such immunity by one man shedding his blood in another's stead, offers a simple and speedy path to this perfection without the least effort. Man sees himself pure and sinless all at once, and 'saved' for only 'believing.'

But perhaps the supreme charm which the blood-purchasing system of salvation has for the human mind is in that it creates a RIGHT TO SALVATION: a 'right' to enter Heaven. The refuge of the

anxious, sin-burdened soul is in the thought ' Jesus has died for sins : He has borne the curse of God due to sin : therefore He has magnified the law and made it honourable : man is consequently set free : the law has no more that it can do : Jesus is the end of the law for righteousness : nay, man can even now *demand* salvation and admission into glory, through Christ's merits and finished work. Jesus by bearing the punishment of sin has bought us with a price, and so also the *right* for man's triumphant entrance into heaven. We only require to come under the conditions of belief in Him. God Himself would do the soul of man an injustice were He to refuse forgiveness or deny it a place in bliss. For eternal and "inexorable justice" forbids that He should punish twice the sin which Jesus has already atoned for by His bloody death.'

It is this clear and satisfying sense of *right to salvation* and to eternal life which is so fondly cherished by men, and which has given a tenacious existence to the Atonement theory on which it is based, for so many centuries. Men will give up much before they will surrender a system of religion which secures them in such a *right*, even when it carries in its bosom the utmost degradation of the nature and character of the Supreme Being, and antagonizes almost every statement that fell from the lips of Jesus.

Every Hebrew rejoiced in a similar *right* when he reflected that the conditions of the Covenant, or Race-bargain with Yahwé, had been fulfilled in his being descended from Abraham, and in his bearing in his body the security-mark of circum-

cision. He was then assured of his *right* to God's favour, and also of being 'righteous.'

There are signs that Jesus Himself found His attempts to deprive men of this delusion well nigh hopeless and fruitless. His contemporaries demanded 'wonders' from Him to prove His *right* to be called their Messiah, the Son of the Blessed. His mission as a divinely Sent-One seems to have accredited Him to Nicodemus in this way, for no man, he was certain, could do the miracles which Jesus did unless God were with Him. Nicodemus was in this respect typical of his age. Jesus sought for faith. *They* asked for evidences to sight. Hence His despairing question, 'When the Son of Man cometh shall He find faith upon the earth?' 'Have I been so long time with you and yet hast thou not known Me?'

'*Right* to the Tree of Life!' Dear has been this 'right' to all men, in all ages, and it was not less so to the Apostles; but as Jesus taught, and as reason herself should convince us, it is a gigantic deception. Jesus never stirs from His one position, 'Fear not, little flock, for it is the Father's good pleasure *to give* you the Kingdom.' 'God so loved the world that *He gave* His only-begotten Son.' 'I *give* unto you eternal life.' The idea of 'right' has no place.

Eternal Life, as all life, is wholly and completely *gift* on the part of the Great Father. It is given also on account of His eternal and unquenchable love, and not because any one, even though it were Jesus, had done anything to create a 'right' to possess it. 'Ask,' He assures men, 'and it shall be

given you,' but no *claim of right* is hinted at. Neither are we to ask 'for Christ's sake.' This phrase does not occur in the New Testament. The reason seems also patent. It is because Jesus Himself is a Gift from the Father, not, indeed, to enable the Father, through the Son's work or merits, to give to man what He has already given in His Son, which would be absurd, but in order to still further reveal the Father to man, who gives to him all things richly out of His love, by virtue of His eternal nature, without 'rights' or 'claims' of any kind. All that He has, He says He gives. 'Son, thou art ever with Me, and all that is Mine is Thine,' is human language but divine truth. The conceptions of 'Justice,' 'claim,' or 'right,' as we have tried to show, are irrelevant and impossible in the system of Jesus' doctrine.

It must be admitted, however, that the 'plan' of 'purchasing salvation' for mankind derives some apparent support in certain statements of Jesus, on account of the particular way His words have been interpreted through law terms and law meanings in use in courts of justice. For a thousand years before Anselm's day, it is well known that the Church believed, and in a general way was confirmed in her belief by her great teachers, that Jesus paid His life to Satan, for man's salvation; seeing that Satan, through man's sin, had acquired proprietary 'rights' in man. Satan was in this way 'bought out,' and all 'rights' over man were henceforth vested in Jesus. Anselm of Canterbury, in the eleventh century, changed the complexion of the 'plan'

by showing in his *Cur Deus Homo* that the parties to the Transaction were not Satan and Jesus, but Jesus and the inexorably just God. Anselm declared that man's Sin was 'Debt.' Man was called upon to pray 'Forgive us our Debts.' What Jesus did, therefore, was to pay man's 'Debt' to God, and the price He paid was His life given up on the Cross, which God was pleased to accept as sufficiently satisfactory to Him. Anselm took the words of Jesus, and the like terms used on this subject in the other writings of the New Testament, and clothed them in the meaning of the 'debt' terminology used in Civil Law.

The Reformers, in the sixteenth century, were not satisfied with Anselm's interpretations of Sin, and taught that it was far more awfully heinous in the sight of God than mere 'Debt.' They declared it to be 'Crime.' They as a consequence laid aside Anselm's Civil-Law meanings by which he interpreted the words of the New Testament, and employed the harsher terms of the Criminal Courts. Man was not only in their eyes a *debtor*; he was a *criminal*; and this charge alone they believed could adequately account for the terrible wrath of God against sin, and the final fiery doom of the impenitent sinner. The Reformers believed that this view of the case effected a more exalted estimate of the 'broken law'; that it deepened the sense of sin to a profounder extent; that it made Hell more intelligible, and more formidable, and more deterring to man in his sinfulness; and on the other hand, that it magnified the love and justice of God, and enhanced the preciousness

of Jesus' Sacrifice in so freely accepting the Criminal's place, and bearing the wrath of the Almighty due to man's offence.

The Reformers in this way followed Anselm's tracings on the theological engraving stone, and cut his scratchings into deeper grooves. The Nature and Character of God, however, suffered yet the more on that account, for where the Church with Anselm had beheld His face overshadowed with a vague displeasure, she now contemplated, with the stern Iconoclasts of the sixteenth century, a Being furious and fulminating in His anger, more terrible than when He rent the smoking mountain, and hurled His bolts of vengeance in the olden days of Moses and Elijah.

Perhaps it is not too much to say that in the Church of this and the preceding century, there is an increasing tendency, as manifested through her most pious and sensitive thinkers, to escape altogether from the thralldom of this heritage of Hebrew theology, with all its distortions of God's Name, its Covenantal and commercial arrangements, its dependence on 'Justice and Judgment,' and its entire forgetfulness of the Fatherhood of the Eternal One, as Jesus has declared Him to the world.

There is an increasing conviction that these various statements of the Atonement Dogma have hid from the eyes of the perishing the true doctrine of the Gospel. Jesus came preaching 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.' This was a proclamation that the gates of God's kingdom were open to all who chose to enter them in the true

spirit. The gates had never been shut. It was the Father's Kingdom.

But Paul preached that the Gospel should be accepted in the form—'Christ died for our sins' (1 Cor. xv. 3). This was a reversion to the Old Testament position. Paul is contented with that standpoint, for he says it is 'according to the Scriptures,' the Old Testament being the only Scriptures he could then refer to. The Old Testament was thus the 'well of salvation' for the great Apostle of the Gentiles. And with regard to it we are inclined to say with Knox when he discusses Paul's temporizing methods of gaining the favour of the Jews (Acts xxi. 17-26), 'I greatly doubt whether either James's commandment or Paul's obedience proceeded from the Holy Ghost' (Knox's *Works*, I., 248). But, undoubtedly, this Pauline form of the Old Testament model of the Gospel has carried all Christendom before it. Yet this form of it is absent in all the great statements of Jesus—the Sermon on the Mount: the Lord's Prayer: the Prayer of the Seventeenth Chapter of St. John, in which He enumerates the particulars of the 'Work' which He was sent to do. Neither is it so described in His commission to His disciples as He sends them to preach: nor in the Parable of the Prodigal Son; nor in the Parable of the Prodigal Daughter, nor in the great parables of the Thirteenth of St. Matthew. It is silent in His Words on the Cross, as well as in His utterances after His Resurrection.

The teaching of Jesus, as well as the experience of men, is trending more and more to lift the grand

work of the Son of Man out of the sin-sphere altogether, and to help us to draw a deep distinction between the true work of a Father and the work of a Judge. The Father, as Jesus has revealed Him, does not comprehend in His functions the blotting out of sin. He gives Life. And it is within this life-zone that the entire work of Jesus lives, and moves, and has its being. Far from sin being a question between Satan and Jesus, or between the Eternal One and Jesus, it is narrowed down by Him to the limits of that relationship which is possible between Man and the Son of Man. Sin is on the Earth. It begins on the Earth, and springs 'out of the heart of man.' Again, the power that forgives sin is on the Earth, and on the Earth it is judged, and through the heart of man it ceases and determines. It is like the deadly malarial mist when once it has gone forth from its marshy bed, but when again it has sunk down into its native reservoir, it is not an evil, but both before and after its fatal circuit, all its forces work together for blessing and not for cursing. And though for a time the heavens may be shut out by it from the eyes of men, it has by no means enveloped the throne of the Father in heaven. Jesus comes from the Father with a mission of life to man, but He bears no mandate from Him concerning sin. The actual gift of Life declares Him to be the Father, but Jesus has not revealed God as biassed in His work or word by what man has either said or done, nor has He shown Him in any function, or moving under any impulse which would justify

us in maintaining that He had man's sin before Him, or consciously in His mind as its Judge. We believe that the words of Jesus, in as far as we have them reported to us in the Four Gospels, amply sustain these statements.

1. In St. John x. 11-18, inclusive, we read: 'I am the Good Shepherd: the good shepherd layeth down his life for the sheep. He that is a hireling, and not a shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, beholdeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth, and the wolf snatcheth them, and scattereth them: he fleeth because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the Good Shepherd, and I know Mine own, and Mine own know Me, even as the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father, and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice: and they shall become one flock, one shepherd. Therefore doth the Father love Me, because I lay down My life, that I may take it again. No one taketh it away from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment received I from My Father.'

There is here no reference to Sin, nor to atonement made for sin; nor to a life given as a substitute for a life demanded; nor to vicarious suffering on account of sin. But when these verses (2, 15, 17) are quoted, it is nearly always assumed that the meaning intended is—'The Good Shepherd layeth down his life for the

sheep' ('s sins). 'I lay down My life for the sheep' ('s sins). 'Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life' (for sins).

But the fact remains that sin is not in the mind of Jesus at all when He speaks these words. *He does not connect sin with the laying down of His life.* His sacrifice is a father's, and a mother's sacrifice, in laying down life and in taking it again in the new life and personality. The interests of life alone are, in Jesus' mind, in giving it, saving it, sustaining it, folding it, and realizing it again. Sin is not His objective in any sense; only Life is.

The illustrations which Jesus employs are plain and simple. A shepherd is tending his flock. He is suddenly confronted by a wolf, or bear, or lion, which puts his sheep's lives in jeopardy. Such a thing was frequent in hill-countries in Palestine, as David seems to have known. The shepherd at once defends them, and as a result, he loses his own life in his endeavour to save theirs.

Did he lay down his life for the 'sins,' or for the lives of his sheep? to satisfy the wolf, or to satisfy the sheep and himself? The same question applies to the verse in chapter xv. 13: 'Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' Here, again, we must be careful not to read into Jesus' meaning one of our own. He does not mean that a man lays down his life 'for his friends' sins.' Jesus is not treating of theological theories, but of the sublime facts of life. He is, moreover, appealing to common experience. He is not referring to an occurrence unique since the foundation of the

world. Shepherds and friends had laid down their lives in that way before. Mothers and fathers had done so for the lives of their children, but not, as a rule, for their sins. In a similar sacrifice, soldiers constantly lay down their lives for their king and country, but in no wise to atone for the sins of these. They do so to maintain existence, and honour, and increase the vitality of their nation, but never to pay the penalty for wrongdoing.

The words of Jesus, we repeat, contain no reference to sin, or to atonement for sin, or to sin as associated in any way with His life and God-given Work. Jesus, indeed, has never said anywhere that He was laying down, or would lay down His life for *sinner*s at all. He declares that He lays down His life for the 'sheep,' which are His own, and for 'Friends.' But He never implies that these are lost, or astray. He speaks of them as under His care, though in danger. His efforts on their behalf are protective in intention, but they are not propitiatory. 'Dying for Sin' has never been a passion of Jesus, but to die for men was His most sacred accomplishment. The difference is immeasurable.

Neither does He say that He *will* lay down His life at some future time. His words have no reference to futurity. They are in the present tense. 'I lay down My life.' 'The good shepherd layeth down his life.' What He is doing for the sheep, as their Shepherd, He is now doing, then and there, while He speaks. He is, of course,

including in the word 'life,' ALL *His life on the earth; all His life in the world.* There is no hint of Calvary, or Crucifixion. He does not restrict the word 'life' to 'bodily life' merely, but includes in it all the 'life' embraced in His personality. If we may venture to use the simile in the interests of the truth, Jesus means that He lays down His life in every day of His earthly existence as a mother lays down her life in every day of her child-bearing. The purpose in Jesus is the same. He begets life, and the new-born soul, but He has no purpose of blotting out sins.

For, it is clear, that in the mind of Jesus, the expression 'laying down life' carries with it a purpose of breathing-in life as well as breathing-forth life. The meaning at the heart of the words is that of Jesus giving His Life out of Himself to be in man as true life eternal, similar to the Vine that gives life to the branch. It is far more on the side of 'vivification' than on that of 'expiration.' And for this reason all such statements, here and elsewhere, which He makes regarding 'giving' His flesh for men to eat, giving His life, giving His body, giving His blood, must be understood in a far wider connotation than Gethsemane or Calvary supplies. In such a 'Giving,' His whole life goes out from Him, in vitalizing virtue to men, in the same way that 'virtue' went out of Him to 'give life' to the woman who had a bloody issue. On this perpetual sacrifice depended the eternal salvation of all mankind, not because it took away sin, but because it gave the world life from Him. He

Himself had asked Peter to forgive his brother unto eternity, with a boundless, endless forgiveness, implying that the Father had done this for all men. Otherwise, He never would have asked man to do so. Therefore, all notion of sin is completely shut out of Jesus' mind when referring to the laying down of life for the world. The world's first need is 'to know the Father,' the Life-Giver, rather than the Acquitter of sin, the Judge. Life is a far more important gift than a 'clean slate.'

The whole world feels this life pulsing in its veins to-day in its civilization and spiritualization. Not merely life shed through nail-holes and spear-thrusts, most sacred though all that must be; but life given to men by love; by truth; by spirit; by the perpetual ever-living Personality of Jesus abiding in it as the Holy Ghost. His is not expired-life, but father-life given in the new-born: or 'laid down' in the new personality of the child, and so also in the new world of 'sheep' and 'friends.' The sacrifice of Jesus was never one for sin, but for life to man, both in eternity and time. It was the Father's sacrifice in Jesus Himself, for He begat Him, and 'laid down His life' in Him, before the world was.

2. The utterances of Jesus at the Last Supper have long been considered bulwarks of the orthodox theory of the Atonement. Jesus takes a loaf and says to His disciples 'This is My body. Take. Eat.' He never said '*Broken* for you.' The Revised Version gives the correct reading of 1 Cor. xi. 24 as 'This is My body which is for

you.' Afterwards He takes the Cup and says 'This cup is the new covenant (or, testament) in My blood,' and then adds, 'which is shed for many,' or, 'which is poured out for many,' or, 'poured out for you.' Matthew alone has the additional words 'unto remission of sins.' With this solitary exception, which we consider by itself below, NO MENTION OF SIN IS MADE BY JESUS at the Last Supper.

The usual meaning attached to these SUPPER deliverances by the supporters of the atonement by bloodshed requires the interpretation, 'This is My body which is given for you' (r sins). 'This is My blood which is shed for many' ('s sins). This is clearly not the meaning, else Mark, the oldest Gospel, and Luke, would not have omitted to state it. What all say unmistakeably (as Professor Menzies has pointed out in his *Earliest Gospel*) is that Jesus *gifts* to the disciples His body and blood. He is saying and doing exactly what He has said and done all His life, viz. that He gives Himself, His life, to the world. *Gift* is the prominent word, and thought. It is not *taking away*.

And next to the idea of *gift* stands the conception that the gift is *to benefit* man. It is not to satisfy law, or to appease God. But in the blood-atonement theory, the ideas 'to take away sin,' and 'to satisfy divine justice,' are the pre-eminent ones. Jesus connotes nothing of these conceptions in His words, but rather emphasizes the *gift* of His life to such a particular degree as to break up the whole gift of it into two representative

and symbolical entities, viz. body and blood. He did not wish that they should ever forget it. He said the same truth before in the statement 'God so loved the world that He *gave* His only-begotten Son.' At the supper, He in turn homologates God's gift by His own gift, and does it deliberately in terms of both His body and His soul. He lays down His *whole life* for the sheep. The testimony of the Supper was not new. He had maintained the gift of His life for men all through His ministry. Life, not sin, was the towering consideration before Him.

This seems irrefutable when we remember the event which filled the minds of Jesus and His followers on this memorial occasion. There were two special thoughts in memory. It was the blood shed and sprinkled on the doors of the Israelitish houses before the people left Egypt, and the food eaten hurriedly to strengthen them on their way. Blood shed: bread eaten: these constituted the passover. Of course, we cannot affirm beyond all doubt that this Jewish Passover was actually in Jesus' mind. But we may reasonably assume that it formed the atmosphere of thought in the minds of His disciples.

What, then, is the ground-thought of the Jewish Passover? Is it sin atoned for? On the contrary, sin is never mentioned in the entire account of it. In the whole of the narrative in Exodus xii. regarding the Passover, both as commanded and carried out, there is not the slightest reference to sin, fault, or flaw, in the people of Israel. This 'sin' is all with the Egyptians, who alone, if

any, required sin-atonement. The 'covenant' or 'testament' made then has the same emphasis laid on the *gift* of life to men as Jesus has in His Passion-words. It is Life: the gift of life. 'When I see the blood I will pass over you, and the plague shall not be upon you to destroy you.' The blood is there as the token that Yahwé will not permit the destroyer to enter, or, in other words, that their *life is given to them in free gift* (see *Encyc. Bib.*, 'Sacrifice,' § 7, and *Religion of the Semites*, by Prof. W. R. Smith, 2nd Ed., (pp. 344-5, 405-8). Blood is *not* on the door-posts to indicate that God's law is satisfied for sin. Sin is not above the horizons of the Exodus scene, as regards Israel. No sin is charged against Israel: no indictment is made. But the Israelites are sheep requiring shepherding; and their lives require to be shielded, that is, given to them, and the blood is the token of this protecting grace. 'Blood' is 'Life.' It is on the doors to symbolize life, and not death or punishment for sin. It had no other meaning to the Israelites. These things must have been present in the minds of the Apostles at the Last Supper. Jesus may also have had similar thoughts.

Our Lord, moreover, uses symbolical language. 'The blood is the life' was a common phrase, and one well-known to the Apostles. His blood is also shed in token that life was granted them of the Father. It is a testifying blood. It attested the grand truth of His life, the Father's love to man. But we should understand the meaning of the terms 'Body' and 'Blood' as used by Jesus

at the Supper, to comprehend *all of His life* as given for man, during all His earthly career, and not merely as ended on Calvary. His death there was the closing act of His gift of entire life to man. His body had always been given; and His blood had always been shed for many.

Here again we have to insist on the present tense. Matthew, Mark, and Luke agree in this completely. 'Which is shed,' 'which is poured out.' Alford, Meyer, Cheyne, Driver, Sanday and others would insert '*which is being shed.*' The verse has no futurity in it, contrary to the common faith that it has nothing else in it save a future reference to Calvary. Jesus is declaring finally the grand fact of all His teaching, viz. 'Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink His blood, ye have not life in you.' His flesh was eaten and His blood was drunk long before He gave up the ghost on Calvary. And to-day we eat Him and drink Him exactly in the same way as His apostles did, and as He asked them to do, viz. by faith in Himself and in His word of truth. And always His insistence is not on sin, but on life. 'Ye have not life in you' is the primary anxiety to Him.

That He is not referring to Calvary is further borne out by the fact that He makes no mention of *the agent* who 'gives' the body or 'sheds' the blood. But when He foretells His death in Jerusalem, He signifies the agent of it. '*They* shall scourge and kill Him, and the third day He shall rise again' (Luke xviii. 33). But as He elsewhere claims *Himself* to be the agent both in

laying down His life and in taking it again, we are bound to assume here that at the supper the giving of His body and the pouring out of His blood are to be referred to *Himself as the agent* who gives. 'Therefore doth My Father love Me, because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one taketh it from Me.'

If this be granted, then, no allusion to Calvary is made by Jesus in these words of the Supper. He speaks in the *present tense*, and He must mean, therefore, the present. And if there were any necessity to insist upon such an incontrovertible fact, we should find support enough in the sixth chapter of S. John. Here He upholds in full the Flesh as His Bread-food, and the Blood as His Life-drink for the world. But it is not a physical food or drink. In interpreting His words, our thoughts are not charged to accept 'blood' drawn by nails and spears, and 'flesh' in mortal pain on a tree. The great fact underlying these words is Life: His Life: His Father's Life. He asks all *then*, and long before the Supper, or Calvary, to eat and drink if they would have eternal life. He gives His flesh for the life, but not for the sins of the world (John vi. 51, 53-58). And again, 'If any man eat of *this* bread, he shall live forever.' It is always a reference to life, but never to sin, or to law vindicated. 'As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he that eateth Me, he also shall live because of Me' (John vi. 57). His concern is not to satisfy God, or law, or justice, by an atoning bloodshed, but to induce men themselves to act by eating and

drinking the truth which His person and principles revealed in order that they might not perish but have eternal life. And He urges them to do so then and there, at once. Futurity is not implied or allowed for. For it is the 'every word' that proceedeth out of the mouth of God which feeds men. Jesus was man's deepest hunger, and man's fullest satisfaction. And in all these statements where Jesus makes eternal life depend on 'eating' and 'drinking,' it is Himself as the 'Word' of God, and as the Father's nourishment for His children, that is central and essential. Jesus is simply 'fulfilling' the universal law. All Life is fed and developed in a body by means of a protoplasmic cell, and all Life is fed and developed in a soul by means of believable truth. Both cell and truth are 'Words' proceeding out from the Life of the Father-God, and their emergence into time, and in man, differ only in the material and manner of their maternity. Both are vessels bearing the Life of the Father-God. But its manifestation in the world, and particularly in man, is determined by its environment, and time-conditions. Eternal Hunger, moreover, must necessarily precede the desire in man for eternal Life. And according to the hunger to be satisfied so must the Life be, and so also must be the environment of the 'cell' or 'truth' which is charged with conveying it. Jesus is the 'Truth,' or, Reality, and it is because He, as this 'Truth,' is imperishable, that the Life given in Him by the Father-God is Life Eternal, or, 'Everlasting Life.' The man perishing in his hunger who 'eats' or 'drinks'

this Truth, or, takes it up into himself by appropriating Faith, 'hath eternal life.' And when it is practicable for us to think of this great matter outside the Creeds, we discern that it is entirely immaterial to the potency of this Truth whether it is beheld as a feeble body in a cradle, or as suffering on a Cross, so long as it conveys the Father-God to the mind and heart of man. For, to reveal and to declare the Father, under all contingencies of existence, is the essential reason for Jesus' presence here, in any circumstances. It is His chief worth to the world.

Contrary to the trend of 'Paulinism,' which seems to place all the importance on Jesus' crucifixion, giving always a materialized image to the mind similar to that of a crucifix held before the eyes, Jesus Himself places nothing essential, either for man's good or for His own work, on that tragic event. He keeps our thoughts constantly bent upon His living, not His dying person: upon principles of life and living, not upon those to be inferred from His death concerning sin or law. To know nothing save Jesus, is to come under the power of the Father, and to be ourselves borne out into endless, absolute love and life; but to 'know nothing save Jesus Christ and Him crucified,' is to confine our souls, and Christianity as a religious system, to a gory memory and a mere spectacle of the imagination. Paulinism says 'Sin': Jesus says 'Life.' Paulinism cries 'Law': Jesus pleads 'The Father.'

3. We have purposely omitted St. Matthew's words of the Supper, because they contain the

solitary mention of Sin in connection with the life or death of Jesus. His words are, 'This is My blood of the covenant (or, testament), which is shed for many *unto remission of sins*' (εἰς ἄφεσιν ἁμαρτιῶν) (Matt. xxvi. 26-28).

Good and weighty authority has expressed the conviction that the additional phrase 'unto remission of sins' may be due to liturgical use at a later period (*Encyc. Biblica*, 'Eucharist,' § 1). We venture to take the passage as it stands. It in no wise invalidates our argument. There is nothing in it answering to the statement—'Christ died for our sins.' It may be noted that the identical phrase is used in St. Mark i. 4 of John the Baptist. 'John came who baptised in the wilderness and preached the baptism of repentance *unto remission of sins*.' The baptism of John is here said to accomplish all that Jesus is believed to have had in view in dying on the Cross!

The Greek terms are the same in both instances. In John's case, the remission of sins is to be effected, not by God, but by man repenting inwardly and in being outwardly baptized in water. Jesus' 'Blood' or 'Life' is poured out 'for many' towards the same end. This gives the fact that, *if* God is concerned in the remission of sins, man has a part to fulfil also. There are indeed always TWO PERSONS concerned in the forgiveness of sins. And remission is not complete until it is accepted as well as given.

Now the Baptist seems to have had no doubt about God's part. There was coming 'wrath,' indeed, but not yet. It was a day of mercy, and

of calling to salvation. God had forgiven men. Jesus stands on the same firm ground. He declared further that the Father had not judged (John iii. 17). But both viewed man in another aspect. Man had not fulfilled his part in the remission. And consequently both the Baptist and Jesus send their first cry among men in a loud peremptory call to 'Repent.' The part of the Father was already complete. The proof of His love was shown in the coming of His Kingdom. 'The Kingdom of Heaven' was 'at hand,' and this could not have been possible unless all were freely 'forgiven' by the Father, if that were required. But we have tried to show that the Father *never* had had anything against man, and that the 'Kingdom' 'come,' and 'coming' was the proof of it.

But although the Father had forgiven, or rather, had never accepted sin as a basis of His thought and action towards man, it was true that man, His prodigal Son, had not submissively come to Him as a little child. Hence the denunciations of John. Hence also, why the 'Life' of Jesus from the beginning was 'laid down' and 'shed' to reveal the Father unto man, and so move him to repentance and acceptance of the remission of sins. Jesus makes the Father's readiness to give man 'eternal life' and 'the Kingdom of heaven,' the burden of all His ministry, but He never urges men to repent in order that God may be enabled to forgive their sins. He lays down His whole life to win man to a condition of childmindedness by which he may receive 'The Father' into his

life, and the knowledge of His having never laid sin to his charge.

Neither the preaching of John, nor of Jesus, sustains the theory that God's mind required to be changed or moved by anyone or anything in order to pardon man's sin. On the contrary, *all their efforts are bent towards changing man.* Only this is required 'unto remission of sins.' John turns his person into a spectacle to effect this change. His aim is to personify in himself that repentance or change, which he desires his people to accomplish. His food, his clothing, and outward mien before the world, were an externalization of that 'sense of sin' which so characterized the Hebrew Race, as well as an expression of that grovelling remorse for sin which their Lawgivers, Prophets, Psalmists, and Priests had demanded in all past time, as due to the propitiation of the wrathful Yahwé. The Baptist sets sin always 'before him,' and in the light of his and their countenance, even as Yahwé had done throughout their entire history. He is the Darkness before the Dawn. But although he points out Jesus as the Lamb who bears away the world's sin, he calls for no propitiatory sacrifices from them, save only 'fruit worthy of repentance.'

The aim of Jesus is identical with John's, viz. *to change men.* The 'remission of sins' will then follow as a realization in themselves of what the Father had already effected in Himself. But whereas John's vision of God deepens further into wrath and vengeful anger, that of Jesus lightens into brighter illumination of the face of the

Heavenly Father. John threatens the 'wrath to come,' Jesus promises 'everlasting Life.' The divergence between the Two Preachers clearly originates in the false and in the true conception of the Eternal Being. It is the difference between Judaism and Christianity. To Jesus, God the Eternal One was in no wise wrathful. On the contrary, He 'so loved the world.' He longed to give the world eternal life. Men were perishing for lack of the Father's life, and not because His burning fury was upon them because of their sins. Man everywhere needed the child-spirit to return to the Father, and so to know His love, and enter into His Kingdom of Life Eternal.

It was this truth which was so vividly presented to John himself, but which he failed to understand, in the symbolism of the descending Dove at Jesus' Baptism, and in the emphatic affirmation on that occasion of the relationship which really existed between God and Man as being one not of wrathful Judge and guilty Sinner, but of Father and 'beloved son.' This scene was Jesus' parable of revelation to John, but John, perhaps, never grasped its purport. He continued to look for a 'Messiah': he still saw God's face clouded in wrath, and a 'generation of vipers' about to be burned up like chaff with 'unquenchable fire.'

Therefore, regarding the two statements of the same words 'unto remission of sins,'—the one as used by John, and the other as spoken by Jesus on the night of the Last Supper,—we must take the true meaning of them to be that to effect such

'remission' a change of mind was necessary to man, *but not to God*. The Blood of Jesus, shed from cradle to Cross, is testamentary of this fact, even as the Spectacle-life of John had been. The blood is shed for *men*, 'for many, unto (or towards) remission of sins.'

But this is really far away from the meaning which is usually imported into the words, viz. 'shed for many men's sins.' Moreover, His Blood is not shed *for all*, as we should expect, if His meaning were 'shed for your sins'; for all men were in the same sinful condition. The reason is apparent. There were 'many' who, to effect such change in themselves, required from Jesus this spectacle-testimony of symbolized 'Body' and 'Blood,' just as 'many' so needed the spectacle-life of John in order to be convinced and moved by his call to repentance. But vast numbers of men believed in Jesus and humbly accepted His saving revelation of the Father-God by simply receiving His word as Truth. When man has attained to his child-relationship with the Father, as Jesus declared Him, the purpose of every kind of testation is fulfilled, and he enters into the Kingdom of the Father's Life Eternal. But 'for many' the spectacle to the eye is as essential as the word to the ear, or the thought to the mind, in order to work repentance in the soul; and just as God has given the panorama of the Universe to tell His Name, and reveal His glory, so Jesus gives to the world His objective Life and Death under the symbols of 'Flesh' and 'Blood,' Bread and

Wine, as testamentary that the Father whom He has revealed 'so loves' His Children.

It is remarkable that in His great prayer in the xvii. of John, Jesus never connects Sin and His 'Work' together. Yet He therein recounts before the Father what He was sent to do, and what He had actually done. To 'die for Sins' is not even hinted at as any part of His mission. But the manifestation of the Father's 'Name' to men, and His satisfaction that they had received it, constitute the definition of His 'work' from beginning to end. Men had really accepted into their faith and life the 'words' given by the Father through Him, and thus the consummation of the unity of mankind with God and His Son had become a grand possibility. Jesus' work was thus already 'finished' (John xvii. 4) before His death on the Cross.

Jesus, therefore, has a policy in life to persuade men, but not to persuade God. The chief power in the Cross lies not in its effect upon God, but in its subduing influence upon man. For example, it first reconciled man to man, the Son of Man, and through Him all men to all men. The love of Jesus to men, proved unto His blood shed for them, has imperceptibly created a conviction of the Father's love for all. Moreover, since Jesus died on the Cross it has been possible for men to forgive each other unto infinity, but, before that death, it was not possible, because, in the end, men always believed that the Great God would ultimately visit judgment upon the sinner however man might forgive. Jesus revealed the Father, and

then all men knew that if man could forgive man, there remained no more judgment upon sin, seeing the Father did not judge.

'UNTO REMISSION OF SINS,' therefore, as an effect flowing from the shed blood of Jesus, shows man remitting sins to his fellowman under the power begotten from that action, and not necessarily God as judging and remitting the sins. For the grand difficulty in the remission of sins has never lain between God and man, but between man and man. It was the terrible fact which Jesus had to emphasize in the parable of the prodigal. All was forgiven by the father; nay, he never had reckoned anything to forgive: but brother could not forgive brother. The Ninevites of old found God's heart soft, but that of Jonah iron and anger. A wider gulf likewise separated the pharisee from the publican than both from God, who listened to the prayer of each (Luke xviii. 9-14). Jesus, again, was the only person who, as representing the true feelings of God, found Himself nearest to Zaccheus of all the crowd that thronged Him. The teaching of Jesus abounds in statements of this awful irreconcilability of man to man. It is, in some measure, to reduce this barrier that the Sermon on the Mount is preached. All its Ethic circles round this purpose. It is also the inhumanity of man to man, and not the judgment of God upon their 'sins,' that is the appalling power at work in the final separation of man from man in the LAST JUDGMENT. For men have ever found it easier to bow before their God than before man, in seeking forgiveness of sin. They feel

repentant in the one case, but remorseful in the other. Repentance before man is in reality the only genuine repentance to experience.

So, at the SUPPER, it is this unremitting spirit among His disciples which stirs the soul of Jesus to its depths. 'One of you shall betray Me.' 'All ye shall forsake Me.' 'If I then, the Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet.' But did they? It is common for God to humble Himself: it is rare in man. All His references to God the Father are, as relating to them, full of comfort, peace, and love. The zone between man and the Father-God has no shadow of sin in it, but the zone between man and man, and between Jesus and His disciples, is full of grief, irreconciliation, and dispeace. It was far more necessary that Jesus should shed His blood towards enabling man to remit sin to man, than that He should shed His blood to enable God to pardon the sin of man. But as a matter of fact, and as borne out by all His teaching, Jesus concentrates His work and words upon effecting the former result rather than upon bringing about the latter. Forgiveness of sins could not be even understood until man had first forgiven man. Hence man is not to pray 'Forgive us our debts,' until he can say 'as we have forgiven our debtors' (Matt. vi. 12). Man's submission before God at the altar counts for nothing until he has first remembered the brother and submitted himself to him (Matt. v. 24). When man has forgiven man, he will then find that God does not require to exercise forgiveness, for *all* will then be forgiven.

This doctrine stands in the forefront of all that Jesus has taught concerning the 'remission of sins.'

Theologians and Commentators have assumed the passage to mean 'This is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins BY GOD.' This is where the confusion enters. For it does not follow that God is involved. By whom sin or the 'sins' here spoken of are to be remitted, is not stated by Jesus. The statement is a general one; but whether God or man, or both are to remit 'sins,' He does not specify. Now Jesus taught that the Power is on the Earth that forgives sins, and His teaching is directed almost completely to obtaining reconciliation between man and man. Concerning God as the remitter of sins, He has practically nothing to say. We believe, therefore, that we keep well within a reasonable interpretation when we incline to the view that in this passage Jesus states the truth, so thoroughly verified in all Christian experience, and by all the history of the Church, that His blood so shed for many, tends to consummate the 'remission of sins' wherever or by whomsoever among men such remission is called for. It is the most powerful influence on the Earth towards the true reconciliation of men.

A point is sometimes made out of the word 'Covenant' in the passage under consideration. Covenant-blood, it is said, necessitates death. It was blood *shed*. But unfortunately for clearness of meaning, the Greek word means both 'Testament' and 'Covenant.' Now the main idea in

the word 'Covenant'-blood is not merely 'blood shed,' but 'Life given' in pledge, or covenant. The all-important thing in blood so shed was the Life that was in it. And in ancient religious practices, blood shed really meant life given up to effect communion. Jesus appears to press this fact home in His expression 'My blood.' Like His other symbolical words, such as 'Flesh,' 'Bread,' 'Body,' 'fruit of the Vine,' which men were to eat and drink, the force of His thought seems to lie in the fact of HIS LIFE GIVEN TO MEN in order that in communion, or in common Life, they might live by and in Him. Virtue of vitality so went out of Him into the perishing souls of men. And this life was 'shed' or given up by Him, in His incarnation, in His Person, His truth, His works, His daily example and life; on, until His crucifixion ended all such giving in the body.

He gave His Life to the world, as following the example of the Father, who gave His Life in all things from the Beginning. And so the Blood of Jesus so given through all His earthly life for men, is 'testamentary' blood, declaring 'The Father' principle in Jesus as the Fountain of Life for the World.

We sadly limit the value of this deliverance of Jesus when we localize it to the area and sphere of the Cross Tragedy. Instead of such limitation, it covers, without doubt, all His blessing of Life and Work: His Birth: His Doctrine: His Miracles: His holy Example and Influence then and forever; as a cup full of the Father's own

Life and nourishment, and as a feast and full meal for the endless hungers of Mankind.

4. Another passage of great power of instruction is found in Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45: 'For verily the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.' Matthew says '*Even* as the Son of Man came not,' etc. The verse is usually held to teach that Jesus came to give up His life on Calvary's Cross in order to effect the redemption of sinners from the punishment due to their sins. *But sin is never mentioned in the passage.* In order to support the theory of blood-atonement, it is commonly understood as if the words were—'And to give His life a ransom for many' ('s sins).

The circumstances of the narrative of which the above verse forms the conclusion are exceedingly interesting. The sons of Zebedee desired the high honour of the first places in Jesus' Kingdom. Their mother was the mouthpiece of this prayer. Jesus was astonished and said, 'Ye know not what ye ask.' He could not give such a thing to any one. The Father who gave to Jesus Himself His place could alone bestow this favour. The ten other Apostles were naturally indignant at the presumption and ambition of the mother and her sons, and separated away. 'But Jesus called them unto Him and said, Ye know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. Not so shall it be among you: but whosoever would become great among you shall be your minister (servant), and whosoever would be first among you shall

be your servant (bond-servant). Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.'

There is not a hint of sin. It is Service, and reward of service, which are the principal points in the narrative; and the end to be attained is greatness, not pardon. It is not sin-ransom, but service-ransom on which Christ lays emphasis. And it is a ransom of 'many,' not of all. Let us be faithful to His statement.

John and James were in no way exercised about the forgiveness of their sins. It is absurd to even fancy such a thing. The narrative contains no shadow of this, nor any hint of it. Their vaulting ambition was to sit in the highest places of the 'kingdom.' This brings their mother to Christ's feet. This calls forth His correction. This creates dispeace among the twelve, and draws from the Master the forcible deliverance on human ministration. Service, bond-service, or slavery, is the grand theme; and He affirms that it is the same service which He Himself is doing that the Twelve must also do, if they would be truly first and greatest. They must condescend to be '*even as the Son of Man.*' Whatever work this meant, whatever service He was now doing 'for many,' it was in the same work and in the same way that they must give their lives ransoms for many. The ransoming means a common service for both.

The confusion existing among commentators regarding this verse arises from the word 'ransom.' It does not appear to be known what Aramaic word Jesus actually used for it, or what Aramaic

word He might be reasonably understood to use. Schmiedel thinks the 'ransom' phrase may be borrowed from the Pauline Theology (*Encyc. Bib.*, 'Gospels,' § 145e). Professor Schmidt says, 'The original form of Matt. xx. 28 (Mark x. 45) may have been, 'Man has not come (*sc.* into the world) to be served, but to serve. When this was applied to Jesus, the dogma of the "ransom" seems to have been added' (*E. B.*, 'Son of Man,' § 40). But in lack of clear definition, the word 'ransom,' even when employed as the Greek word '*lutron*' authorizes, does not give us any encouragement to regard Christ's life as given for the Sins of 'many' in the way of a blood atonement. '*Lutron*' is *price paid for redemption from slavery*. This is its usual meaning.

Now slavery is a state of *misery* and bondage to the enslaved one, but it is never a state of *guilt*. He is made slave against his will. He is not guilty. But he looks for freedom. And he can be truly ransomed from slavery by a price paid, though this did not necessarily mean that he was redeemed from guilt as well as from bondage.

Jesus does ransom from bondage—bondage in every sense, 'good' or 'evil.' He came to declare that truth which alone gives freedom. 'Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.' He laid down His life,—all His life, and not merely a short period of it,—in effecting the freedom from bondage of death for men. *Any freedom*, in life or death, which the world knows to-day is the result of this price, or ransom, given in His grand life-service to it. He has attained

the highest place in the kingdom of the Father because of this service to the world. And if the Apostles, the Church, the race of man, would also reach the high places, they must attain to it in the same divine service, and by paying the same ransom of life-service to man. '*Even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto.*' We might imagine Jesus to say, 'O, sons of Zebedee, ye know not what ye ask. You want to be ministered unto right royally; to have the highest gifts and favours of heaven served to you! This, forsooth, is how the Gentile lords demand service. Not so shall it be among you. You shall serve rather, and serve not merely as common servants, but as bond-servants—as true slaves. Renounce all thought of getting anything for yourselves. Think only of how the poorest one you know is to get the highest places in heaven by your service to him, yea, even if you should give up life to render such service to him. If you can redeem him by this bond-service from his slavery, his fears of God or of man or of death, give your life freely for him, and so ransom him.' '*Even as the Son of Man came*' to be the Slave of Slaves; to ransom the world by His life laid down.

It is rather remarkable that Jesus should never in any instance (except perhaps John v. 14) attribute *guilt* to those whom He served or healed. He acknowledged their *need of help* only. And in being 'a ransom for many,' His attitude is ever the same as that of the good Samaritan to the wounded man. No guilt is charged. He comes

to the man in his wounds, to the sheep in its lost state, to the disease-stricken, *and ransoms them from* that state of misery and of death by His service, and frees them, and gives them new life, but He never attributes *guilt* to them, or makes profession of freeing them from sin or guilt. In every case where He alludes to sin, it is to declare that it is forgiven; that it requires no judicial process, or service, or ransom to obliterate it.

And it humbly appears to us that so it must be with the Church and all Christians. The world needs redemption from every misery of body, of mind, and of soul, and every Christian can reach a high place in heaven by becoming a slave in this world-service and by giving his whole life to it as ransom, *even as the Son of Man gave His life*, and so followed the example and did the will of the Father. But it is not a service under compulsion of law, but under the impulses of love; not to take away sin, but to give new life. He ransoms man from the death-slavery by His Life-slavery: from Law-slavery by His Love-slavery. If 'ransom' had really been given to free from sin, it would have referred to what was being done and to what was past. But the entire drift of Jesus' words points to such 'ransom' given to attain something to be realized *in the future*, viz. 'greatness,' or the high place in the kingdom.

The word 'Ransom,' in short, in Jesus' lips, never means 'ransom' from guilt, or 'ransom' from sin. He is sent by the Father to reveal Him to men, to declare in that Name the forgiveness which already exists in the Father's bosom. By

this service He ransoms man, and, so serving, He thereby enters into greatness—a greatness which consists not in receiving an advantage for one's self, but in mediating life to the perishing.

5. This is the more evident when Jesus comes to give an account to the Father of His work done on earth. This He does in the seventeenth chapter of the 'Gospel according to St. John.' No words can measure the value of this prayer. It is the Amen of all human language. It is the Amen also of His words to Man. In it Jesus declares His work finished. Not, be it noted, that it will soon be finished on Calvary's Cross, but that *it is finished*. Twice He declares His work finished *before* He dies, although all Christendom corrects Him in an authorized faith that only *after* His death on the tree was His work to be finished. In this great prayer there is no mention of man's sin. Indeed, in none of the great utterances of Jesus is atonement for sin referred to. Instead, the trumpet note which resounds throughout is the 'Name' of the Father. He begins this prayer with it. 'Father, the hour is come,' and again He closes with it, 'O righteous Father.' And He puts His 'work' in the front place. 'Thou gavest Him authority over all flesh, that whatsoever Thou hast given Him, to them He should give eternal life.' To give Eternal Life: not to shed blood in lieu of sin forgiven. This was and is 'His work.' And the way He did His 'work' follows immediately (sixth verse). 'I manifested Thy Name unto the men whom thou gavest Me out of the world.' And, so also, 'I kept them in Thy

Name.' 'Holy Father, keep them in Thy Name.' 'I made known unto them Thy Name.' 'It is Eternal Life to know Thee.' Salvation is only in the Father's name.

Nothing in the Prayer falls below this high altitude. Not the sin of man, but service to man is the profound theme. Not the glory of sin blotted out by blood 'shed' has been given unto them, but 'the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given unto them, that they may be one, even as We are one.' The Infinite God in Fatherhood and in Love gave to Jesus Eternal Life, and in the oneness of this life, all, as Jesus, are children unto Him. 'I live by the Father,' was His own statement. Jesus was His Son, and so the Father to men. And because of this Nature and name of God, the world, before Jesus, never knew God. 'But I knew Thee,' He confidently asserts, 'and these knew that Thou didst send Me.' *Jesus has never included His crucifixion on Calvary, or His death, inside of His 'work.'* Far from His having come into this world to die on Calvary, He does not include His death there as in any way a part of His mission. He shrinks from drinking 'the cup.' He shrinks from 'the hour' that came; He prays that they may pass from Him. He does not wish to drink the 'cup' or to endure the 'hour.' He is an unwilling victim of slaughter. He nevertheless sees clearly that it will happen. He listened to Moses and Elijah 'who spake of His decease (departure) which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem,' and He tells His disciples that He will be killed there, and rise again the

third day.' But He never sets it down as a factor in His work, or essential to the pardon of sins; and neither to God nor to man did He ever hint that His death would 'purchase salvation' for the world, or immunity from pain or punishment due to guilt. Whenever it is possible to see in any of His words a reference to His own crucifixion, it is never at the same time possible to connect His statement with sin.

6. For example, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth may in Him have eternal life' (John iii. 14-15). Most commentators understand this 'lifting up' to be the crucifixion, just as John himself understands the verse 'And I, if I be lifted up from (out of) the earth' to 'signify by what manner of death He should die' (John xii. 32). We prefer to understand all such references of Jesus to 'lifting up' in the sense given in Acts v. 30-31, where the two meanings of 'lifting up' are set against each other. 'The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew, hanging Him on a tree. Him did God exalt with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour.'

We ask, to which exaltation or 'lifting up' did Jesus refer in John iii. 14? Was it that of the Cross, or that of being Prince and Saviour? Was His meaning a material or a moral 'lifting up'? Peter condemns the 'hanging on the tree,' but approves God's exaltation of Jesus to be Prince and Saviour. However, we place no stress on either sense. Yet we should always

remember that, where it is possible, the higher meaning of Jesus' words ought to be preferred.

But what we have to note is that when Jesus refers to Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, His reference is not to sin, but to life: He is to be lifted up like the serpent *to give eternal life*, not to atone for sins; or, in order that sin may be pardoned. What we have to ask is the question: Whether did Moses lift up the serpent to indicate that sin was by this means atoned for, or, that life was already granted? The words in Numbers xxi. 7-9 read—'And the people came to Moses, and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against the Lord, and against thee; pray unto the Lord that He take away the serpents from us. And Moses prayed for the people. And the Lord said unto Moses, Make thee a fiery serpent and set it upon a standard: and it shall come to pass, that every one that is bitten, when he seeth it, shall live. And Moses made a serpent of brass, and set it upon the standard, and it came to pass that if a serpent had bitten any man, when he looked unto the serpent of brass, *he lived*.' Here, sin is not atoned for by sacrifice of the serpent. There is no sacrifice except the sacrifice of repentance. And the serpent is not a sign of sin punished, but of sin already pardoned. All sin is pardoned to the people *before the serpent is raised*. The serpent was a Way of Life: Jesus is also the Way to Eternal Life. It was this fact He meant to press home upon Nicodemus by the Serpent illustration.

‘The image of the brazen serpent,’ says Bey-schlag, ‘even if Jesus meant it to allude to the death upon the Cross, does not point to an atonement, but to recovery, that is, regeneration; and so, the idea of propitiation (cancelling of guilt) through the death of Jesus, although it is not unknown to 1 John ii. 2, nowhere appears in Jesus’ own words’ (*New Testament Theology*, Vol. I., 275: T. & T. Clark, 1895). There is also depth of meaning in the words of Ruskin regarding this conception of the forgiveness of sins, which comes with peculiar emphasis from a man who though profoundly religious had no theological theories to sustain. ‘This only I must hint to the reader,’ he says, ‘for his own following out—that if he earnestly examines the original sources from which our heedless popular language respecting the washing away of sins has been borrowed, he will find that the fountain in which sins are indeed to be washed away, is that of love, not that of agony’ (*Modern Painters*, Vol. V., p. 321: Wiley & Sons, N.Y.A., 1881).

7. We must, finally, glance at the great statement concerning the sin against the Holy Spirit (Matt. xii. 22-32; Mark iii. 20-30; Luke xi. 14-20; xii. 8-10), in which Jesus emphasizes (1) the ultimate reference of sin for forgiveness or ‘never forgiveness’; (2) the Personal Instrument by which all are enabled to accomplish good; healing, casting out devils, and forgiveness of sins included; and, (3) how sin might, under certain conditions, be impossible of pardon, and become eternal.

Mark, alone of the Three Synoptists, gives the

words, 'guilty of an eternal sin,' and the keystone statement, 'Because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.' Nowhere is sin so prominent in Jesus' teaching: nowhere is atonement for sin so completely absent.

1. 'If I by the Spirit of God cast out devils, then is the kingdom of God come upon you' (Matt. xii. 28), is a statement which asserts that while Jesus was conscious that the Father and Himself were one; so likewise, He and the Spirit were one; and that in the totality of things, He stood to man to be all the kingdom of God was to the world. It is the same consciousness of inter-pervasion of personalities under the powers of Life, to which brief and imperfect reference has been made in chapter iii., p. 72. The Father abides in Jesus (John xiv. 10-11), but it is also the Spirit in Himself who casts out the demons. It is likewise implied that by the same Spirit the sons of the blasphemers cast out devils (Luke xi. 18-19).

But Jesus does not say that the Spirit is *conscious* of sin done against Himself, and will pardon or never pardon. Like the Father, the Spirit does not judge. In the Gospels, the Spirit reveals no emotion: He is not associated with Life, but with Truth; and He does not speak of Himself, but consistently shows the world the things of Jesus only (John xvi. 13-15). Jesus, however, claims the final referability of all sins and blasphemies to Himself, and maintains His complete dominion over the realm of sin, when He affirms which sins shall, and which shall not be forgiven to men. He assumes, consequently, that the attribution of an

'unclean spirit' to Himself, while a blasphemy against the Holy Spirit whose personality was blended in His own, has in it no *purpose* of blasphemous accusation against anyone save Himself. Every sin is ultimately sin against the Son of Man, to whom it comes at last for judgment. For all judgment has been committed unto Him by the Father.

He has clearly no thought in His mind that a sin might possibly be done by man which would surpass all power to deal with it, and remain to eternity a defiance of both heaven and earth, or that the Love that pardons sin has its limits, and cannot forgive unto infinity. He is trying to show that men may so block their own path towards forgiveness as never to be able to come to the knowledge that forgiveness has been given them. For before the knowledge of forgiveness comes the conviction of sin. And this is the Spirit's special work. He convicts the world of sin, because they believe not on Jesus (John xvi. 8-9). He reveals Jesus to men, the Truth, the Reality. But, to convince one's soul that this Spirit is 'unclean'; Satan; Beelzebub; is to draw an eternal bar across the way that leads to Jesus who reveals the forgiveness of all sins. If the prodigal, *e.g.*, had remained in the far country, he never would have known that his father had never accused him, and to himself his sin would have been 'eternal.' The 'eternal sin' is not, therefore, a statement that the Father, or the Spirit, shall never forgive, but that the sinner may never have this forgiveness accepted by himself. The Spirit who seeks to be instru-

mental in doing him good, healing him, casting out his devil, showing the pardon-truth in Jesus, he calls 'unclean'! And in this blasphemous mind he may abide both in 'this age' and in 'that which is to come' (Matt. xii. 32). Jesus points to man's power of limiting his blessings, not to the limits of the pardoning power in Himself. Atonement, or communion with the Father in Jesus through the Spirit, depends wholly on the willingness or unwillingness of man, and not on that of the Godhead.

There is still another aspect of the case. Jesus found it necessary to reason with the blasphemers. They said, 'He hath an unclean Spirit.' He at once assumed the ground they occupied, and, as it were, said—'If the Spirit in Me is unclean; Satan; the Father of lies; how can I antagonize Myself, and cast out Myself? Is not this an "eternal" impossibility? And if I, the Son of Man, have power on earth to forgive sins, and have all power over sin, how is it possible that any sin should be forgiven, when I am Myself, as you suppose, the Father of Sin?' In such a case, should not all sin abide forever unpardoned? Should not sin be, indeed, eternal?

The inference, therefore, to be drawn from the words, 'but unto him that blasphemeth against the Holy Spirit it shall not be forgiven,' is that they are words of grief, and not of judicial menace: compassionate of man, but not indicative of inexorable relentlessness in the bosom of Eternal Love.

CHAPTER XIII

JESUS AND HIS CHURCH

IN the foregoing chapters we have tried to give the outlines of the Kingdom of God: the Personality of the Father: the Perfect Human Character: and Sin, with some of its correlatives. A few thoughts still seem necessary concerning (1) the Person of Jesus, and (2) that vast Ideal embodied in His CHURCH, which the current centuries see slowly yet surely building up out of Man, now, and in the future of the human race, as His own Special 'WORK.'

1. Jesus is Himself the world's controversy. All life circles around His life; all thought broods and wrestles under His thought. On the scale of universality, every creature, personal or impersonal; in heaven, or in earth, or in the deeps below the earth; comes to Him ultimately; by paths straight or crooked; in time soon or late; to be named, and to know the mystery of itself and of all other existences. It is immaterial whether He called Himself God; Son of God; Son of Man; Man, or Messiah; for no true Deity ever consciously defines itself. But the Object of high

worship, before whom we do in these latter days prostrate our souls, and adore, is no other than the Being who has been formed within us by the Person and teaching of Jesus. He has drawn all men unto Him, as He said. The conception of the Eternal which now dazzles the abashed vision of men; vivid to every eye in Creation; in Reason; in Science; and in Religion; focusses in white light these many prismatic streams in a Name which even the most sceptical declare to be above every name that is named.

Jesus alone answers the perpetual interrogations that rise, meditative or panic-born, upon the four winds of heaven. Each conception of God, ancient or modern, Heathen or Hebrew, is but a step in the ladder that Jacob saw, and leads up to Him. It is also His presence in Time which constitutes their mittimus from all hearts; each as a glorious sun declining through the firmament of creature-worship, inevitably to set in radiance or gloom beneath human horizons, after a time, times, and half a time. For there are vaster realms beyond the arc of their circling, in the Eternity which envelops them and us; and Jesus, and His 'Little Flock' with Him, have already entered upon that higher heaven in ascending to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God.

The Divinity of Jesus! Who can be surprised that men early worshipped Him as a God, or that the entire Church in its vigorous youth was convulsed upon the question of His Personal Godhood. Yet if ever 'Vanity of vanities' was stamped upon human endeavour, it was upon that controversy.

For He Himself is the sole and only standard left to man of what man is to account Divine. Every Ideal of divinity, irrepressible in every human soul, stands defined by who and what He is. He is not to be placed by reference to other conceptions of Divinity. It is He who places all other 'Gods,' high or low, relative to Himself. For it is certain that no man by searching can find out what is Divine. But endless approximations, as from the beginning, drive the quest of man continually forward; and always as men lay down their weapons of theological conflict, and rest in the theories they have invented, it transpires that Jesus is the full sum of these approximations, as well as the unresolved residual element which is still left beyond them.

In what attribute of divinity is Jesus to be accounted inferior to any Deity ever worshipped by man? In which manifestation of deity has He been surpassed by any one of them? Is it not rather the case that, when we set the illuminating array of Gods, great and greater, around Him, each casts a deeper shadow into space by reason of His light? Contrast Him with the God in Eden, and the latter is by comparison clumsy, unsympathetic, blundering, and ignorant. He is far more exalted in moral nature and dignity than the God of Noah's Flood; the vengeful One of Sodom; or the dream-deity of Jacob. The God of Moses' experience, when placed by Jesus' side, is terrible, inhuman, harsh, and cruel. Well might Jesus lament as He scanned the throned deities of the Past, 'O righteous Father, *the world*

knew Thee not.' And more and more it becomes imperative to every worshipping and reverent spirit that as Jesus has assumed co-partnery in the seat of the Supreme Power, Eternal life being bound up to man in knowing not only 'the true God,' but Jesus Christ whom He sent (John xvii. 3), no man can safely put asunder his Ideal God from his Ideal Man. And perhaps it is just in the sublime unity of these TWO PERFECTIONS that we realize the transcendent excellence of Jesus, and the corresponding imperfections of the Gods, not-human, who have been hitherto worshipped and glorified. The Ideal God! The Ideal Man! Who has revealed both, clothed in human form, embodied, incarnate, save Jesus? And the marvel is, that He has revealed the Deity, and the Divine, not as the Unique, the Awful, the Supernatural, the Once-in-a-thousand-years; but as the Natural, the Day-Thing, the CHILD. Jesus indeed truly sums up all we know, or can guess, of both Ideal God and Ideal Man, in Himself, the Ideal Child. And so, only through Him can we realize the Father, and the Father-God. All other conceptions of Deity and the Divine are, as Carlyle has truly said, 'Consecrated Falsities.' For 'No one,' said Jesus, 'cometh unto the Father but by ME.'

Habit of thought, perhaps, blinds us to the true vision of the Divine. The wonderful, the extraordinary, the miraculous, have been to man for ages the marks of the God. Yet so natural is Jesus; so simple; so full of our common selves; so familiar to the human eye! He has no mark

of the traditional God to show us. He does not come with observation. All other forms of Deity appeared as advertising themselves Divine, but Jesus craved concealment as a sacred service to Himself. It is characteristic in Jesus' portrayal of the God-Idea that the Father should be heard saying 'Hear *Him*' and not 'Hear *Me*'; that Jesus Himself should put the Father first and not His own personality, and that the Holy Ghost should be found taking the things of Jesus, and not the things of Himself, to show them unto men. The grand Self-Sacrifice of Jesus on earth begins in the Order of Love practised by the Godhead. The self-effacement of God in heaven and on earth is truly emblemized only in the modesty of the babe. It is astounding that Jesus should expect men to accept these lineaments of the Eternal Being as the truth of Highest Divinity. But this was the celestial robe in which He clothed Himself as He walked among men. No sooner does Peter discover the Divine One, and burst out with 'Thou art the Christ,' than Jesus hastens to charge not only Peter, but all upon whose astonished ears the revelation had fallen, that 'they should tell no man of Him' (Mark viii. 30). Transfigured in light so intense as to make the air around them appear a cloud overshadowing them, He again charges the disciples 'that they should tell no man what things they had seen' (Mark ix. 9). He mourns the expectation of His generation that He should work 'wonders' that He should be rendered famous: that the people should seek to make Him a king. He seems to have dreaded

to assume for even one brief moment those tawdry, irruptive semblances of garish power in which the ancient peoples delighted to array their reverberating Gods. He clearly abhorred the character of the Divine as His disciples reckoned Divinity (Matt. xvi. 23).

It is the transcendent ease with which Jesus works and moves that conceals His inexhaustible strength. There is no passion; no doubling down of heaven to effect a dead lift of things. By contrast, the God Yahwé in wrath and fury almost overturns Himself in His exertions of might. Yet the weakness of it is so manifest that Moses cannot refrain from upbraiding rejoinders, and distracted references to what the jeering people of Egypt will say about it!

Jesus is never so truly God as when He worships God. In such an attitude, how different is His demeanour from that of all Old Testament prophets and holy men. What He sees of Deity is not visualized by Him as the High One, the Holy One, the Mighty One, the I Am, the Wonderful, the Lord of Hosts, the Judge, the King. God is not clothed for Him in astonishments, or in images of terror and splendour. Nor, on the other hand, is man before God the mean and frail thing he is depicted in the Hebrew Rolls. Those wallings over the shortness of time, and over all men having been made in vain (Psalm lxxxix. 47), are silences on His lips. Death, to Jesus, is never the 'king of terrors,' nor an 'enemy.' Neither does Jesus address God in the overstrained and flattering language of laudation so common to a

devout Hebrew. The pose and posturing grandiloquence of such exclamations as 'Who is a God like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders!' has no place in the devotions of Jesus. He is never surprised or startled with God. Thought and Speech flow naturally, and calmly, as between two hearts which never know separations, and require no new beginnings to their communion. He never 'draws near' to God, nor 'approaches' Him. He is in the bosom of the Father always; Nature in the Highest, and the highest name of God. Yet so deep is His unconsciousness of His Godhood that while He communes with the Eternal, He soliloquizes with Himself.

For example, He never gives us the impression that He is conscious of doing any wonderful thing even when He is unfolding the Parable of the Prodigal, the Supper discourses, the Wisdom of the Sermon on the Mount, raising the dead, casting out demons, or reducing the hurricane. He does not call upon heaven and earth to behold how great it is, nor exclaim how it magnifies the glory of God. He never abandons Himself to passions of fear in God's presence, nor grovels before Him in panting excitements. He makes no frantic appeals, He never implores God to 'remember,' never reminds Him of His great power. In His constant attitude before God, Jesus is as calm and as natural as a summer day. The atmosphere He moves in is palpitating with deity and divine life, but it is stormless and cloudless, with no panic and no contention. His repose is as of the blue

sky and the immovable hills. His divinity glows out of His unfathomable naturalness.

But He is never conscious of being 'divine.' He assumes that what He says and does is not impossible to others to say and to do. He declares that His disciples shall do 'greater works than these.' His supreme belief in man's potentialities is indeed astounding. He believes that whatever He Himself has done can be done by others, even to removing mountains and planting trees in the sea. Nothing of all He has accomplished is impossible to man where Faith is, even though it should be granular.

Therefore, in the very nature of things, as He creates in His own Person a new and totally fresh conception of the Supreme Being, so He also renders all the great title-names of Deity of the Past,—the pillars on which the temple of human religion rested,—insecure, inadequate, and untrue. He is only remotely the 'Messiah' of the Hebrews. He merely found that royal seat vacant and sat down in it. He is indeed the 'SENT' of God, but sent into the world as a child is sent, with the primal and final purpose to declare the Name: that is, the nature and character of the Father. To reveal God is the highest purpose of the universe; and the child, and all children, have no more glorious mission bestowed upon them than to declare this God as their Father. This constitutes the supreme and only setting-apart, anointing, or 'sending' of Jesus. He is as naturally the Father's Son as the flower, the rain, the sun, and the grass are natural. And no higher

degree of relationship can be conceived for Him, nor does He claim any higher. He is in the Father and the Father is in Him. He lives the Father, He, a man, and so by Him shall all men live. To regard Jesus as 'authorized,' or 'anointed' for His life and work in this world, would be similar to conceiving a tree to be 'authorized,' or 'anointed' to live, bloom, and bear fruit, or to regard a child as 'authorized,' 'anointed,' or 'Sent' to be the Son of its Parent. Nature cannot be conventionalized nor invested with relationships spun out of the fancies of pious men, and Nature is the foundation of the doctrine of Jesus concerning all life and functions of life. God, the Supreme Being, gives Life, and so is the Father of all that lives, and every doctrine of Jesus flows from this primal truth in its natural order and power.

2. From no other standpoint, than this natural one, is it perhaps possible to fathom what Jesus means by His Church, His 'ECCLESIA.' But as in the case of the 'Kingdom,' so also in the case of the 'Ecclesia,' He lifts the term out of its mud surroundings and gives it a purified setting among the stars. The names, in their several languages, were historically current among the nations, but as He uses the terms, they enclose new thought, new feeling, new spirit, and new Life. They are likewise not only transfigured: they become *one* in meaning, in His vision of a perfected humanity; in the future realization of God's finished Work upon the Earth. In the mind of Jesus, there is ultimately no division between His

Kingdom and His Ecclesia. These terms are simply contributions drawn from the conceptions of the Hebrew and the Greek, which He uses to declare the relationship of Man to God as a Unity which is to obtain in Time and in Eternity.

His use of the word 'Ecclesia' is not, consequently, intended to set forth the Ideal of a 'Council' of Christians who call themselves members of a Society or Community. They are the Father's Children, and must be, by the fact of such relationship, more than members of a council or of a citizenship.

The Father-God gave to Jesus His Kingdom, but Jesus announces that He Himself will build His Ecclesia, His CHURCH. He emphasizes in no ordinary way His own agency in this work, the foundation on which it was to stand, and its triumphant endurance against the gates or powers of the Grave (Matt. xvi. 13-20). But He charged His disciples against publishing Him as the 'Messiah.' The 'Church' had little to do with that Jewish invention. What Jesus commended so earnestly in Peter's heartfelt declaration, 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God,' lay far apart from the narrow associations of the 'Anointed One' whom the Apostles expected to ascend the throne of David.

The pivot of this much-interpreted passage (Matt. xvi. 13-20) is found in the words '*The Son of the Living God*,'—an addition given in the account by St. Matthew, and 'the most important of all,' as Professor Schmiedel rightly asserts (*Enc. Bib.*, 'Simon Peter,' § 16). Jesus seems to find

in Peter's words the first symptom of the world's acceptance of the truth concerning His real nature and character; Peter, in believing it, being the First to cut through that lava-crust of national conviction and indurated misconception which held the Jewish world in thrall. Only for a brief moment, too, did Peter rise into the light, for he speedily tumbled down to the old bigoted levels, like a bird too weak to fly long, and was heavily reprov'd by his disappointed Master as thus taking the lead of 'Satan.'

For when Peter says 'Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God,' he is clearly equating 'The Christ' with 'The Son.' It is not as a Jewish 'Messiah' that Jesus appears to him, but as the Living God's Son. This was the truth at last, and Jesus exults to hear it from the lips of Peter. His work on earth was possible of completion after such a confession. He thereupon soars into the loftiest ecstasies of soul; blesses Peter; reveals the evidence of the Father's hand in giving to him this truth; and, in a brilliant forecast, fills the great future of the world with superlative hopes of an Ecclesia, a CHURCH, which should outlast the powers of Time, Death, and corruption. The thought of Jesus finds centrality in *Life* and all that that fact connotes. The terms He uses are significant. 'My Father'; 'The Son'; 'The Living God': that is, the Live-Giver; the Life-Receiver; and the God of all Life. The 'Messiah' conception is non-existent in Jesus' mind.

It seems to us also a clear continuation of the

same current of thought when Jesus says, 'And upon this rock (*petra*) I will build My church.' 'Petra' is not a masculine reference, as hinting at Peter. It is feminine; and 'Life' (*ἡ Ζωή*) appears to be understood, more especially when the great 'enemy' of Life, that is, Death, or 'Hades,' is set over against it. The CHURCH He would 'build' is, in the thought of Jesus, the Home of the Living, as opposed to Hades, the Home of the Dead. All the basal facts of the Christian Religion are thus caught up into the flame of His seraphic spirit, and soar upwards into the highest realm of human aspiration. Jesus lays the foundations of His Church, not on man, but on the Life of the Father, and on the Life of His Son, and on the Communion which all men may enjoy eternally through that Life given unto them. Jesus builds His Church on the fact of Life-giving, and the 'gates of Hades' cannot prevail against it, because it is founded in the Life of 'the Living God,' and in the same Life given in His Son, and in Him to all men. Flesh and blood had not revealed it to Peter, but the Father in Heaven. Peter indeed had realized in this way a communion with God which can only become possible to one who realizes in God a Father. It was Revelation which was also Communion through the umbilical of Life. He discerned, and was the first to discern, that Jesus was not merely a 'Messiah,' but a Son; a Child of the Living God. This is the foundation fact of the WORK of Jesus upon the Earth, *the revelation of the Father*. All rests upon this Rock. Jesus thus goes straight to the eternal elements

which are essential, and blesses Peter with an overflowing heart when he is able to discern this truth. For with such a faith in the Life of the Father as incarnate in a Man on earth, all possibilities of divine life in man sprang forth immediately. The disappointment of Jesus, when Peter afterwards falls from this high vision to the old grovelling Messianic notions, is a faint measure of the value which He placed upon its reception by the Apostle. For the meaning underlying the word 'Son,' in this passage has a far deeper connotation than is to be found in the 'Son'-word of the later Creeds of Christendom. It has the natural meaning of CHILD. Jesus is the begotten Child of the Eternal One. God is so vitally related to man. So close is their common Life, and so near their communion or 'Revelation' in that Life. Yet, as Professor Schmidt has regretfully said, 'That it means more to be a child of God in the sense in which Jesus used the term than to be the Son defined by the Nicene creed, is a truth still hidden from many who are wise and prudent' (*Enc. Bib.*, p. 4704).

The 'ECCLESIA' of Jesus is thus, by the material of its construction, nearer to the constitution of a Family than to any other institution upon the earth. But even the conception in the word 'FAMILY' still fails to give the full meaning which underlies Jesus' use of the term 'Ecclesia.' He repudiates, as we have seen above, all sex connotations in the relationship of the Father in Heaven. This was, of course, the broken reed on which the Hebrew People leant as being Children of Abraham. Because they were Abraham's children,

therefore they were the favourites of Heaven! And this fallacy broadened far into their conceptions of their 'City,' their 'Nation,' and their 'Race.' The perpetual 'kingdom' of David was but another phase of this delusion.

Jesus employs the term 'kingdom' to interpret the Father's relation to His children. It is 'of heaven,' 'of the Father,' 'of God.' The child is of such as can enter it. But the 'Ecclesia' is on the Earth. Jesus vows He will build it there. The Kingdom *comes* likewise, but the Ecclesia, the Church, is '*built*' stone by stone. The Kingdom had no beginning, for it is God's Life; but the Church is due to the entrance of Jesus into Time as 'the Child of the Living God.'

Both, however, are based in Life. But the Kingdom descends from the Life of the Father, while the Ecclesia rises up out of the Life of Jesus on earth. Jesus receives the Kingdom from the Father, but *in His own life given to men* He builds up His Ecclesia or Church. The New Birth, consequently; the birth, viz. which Jesus Himself underwent as the Son, the Child of the Living God, is appropriately associated originally with the Kingdom (John iii. 3-5), and without which birth no man can see it; whereas the Ecclesia, the Church, is associated with His own and Man's Communion with the Father, and the Father's revelation to Man through the life of His Son Jesus. The specific distinction of the Kingdom and the Ecclesia is indeed one found in the distinction of the Father's Life given to man in the new birth, as it was given to Jesus, and the Communion of

the two personalities of Father and Child on that basis. We enter the Kingdom when we are 'born anew' in the Father's life, by the truth of Jesus, in the same way that we enter the physical kingdom of life by the protoplasmic cell when born into the world. But there is no Ecclesia until, on the human side, there has been a true apprehension of the Father by the child, and thereby an entrance made into Communion the one with the Other. *It is this COMMUNION of Father and Child, through the relation of Life, which constitutes the true CHURCH.* Without it there is no 'Ecclesia' either visible or invisible. This Communion being perfect in Jesus and the Father, it is perfect Communion in Thought, Feeling, and Will, or in Knowledge, Love, and Obedience, and therefore the Perfect Life. Man entering it finds it Eternal Life, for he then has full Communion with the true God and Jesus whom He sent (John xvii. 3). This is the Rock upon which the 'Church' is built.

It is this that seems to fill the thoughts of Jesus when He takes up the well-known word of Greek usage, 'Ecclesia,' and from its connotation of 'Council' exalts it to the spiritual sphere of Divine and Human Communion. Jesus affirms to Peter that the words which He has just expressed prove that flesh and blood had not revealed to Him the foundation truth they contained. He had been in true communion with the Father in Heaven as His child. He also, with Jesus, had entered into relationship with the Eternal One as a child communing with a Father. Perhaps, no event in

history transcends this one in sublimity, for it meant the ultimate ascent of all mankind from the false Gods to the Father-God; an ascent indeed from death unto Life. All old things had passed away, all had become new. No fact in the development of the Human Race is so electric with primal power and potentiality. It implied that Religion, as Life, upon which all sublunary things ultimately move; and all relationship between man and his God, and its attendant morality; or what is meant by the perfecting inter-relationship of man with man in family or in state; must henceforward, throughout all coming ages, determine humanity as a totality towards that high consummation of ideal communion which blends the Seen with the Unseen, the Earth with Heaven, the Living with the Dead. It was the coming of the Eternal One as the Father-God, making Himself 'an awful rose of dawn.'

Viewed in the light which it affords, and with the data of experience which it supplies, Peter's realization of the Father-God *in a Man*, when competently apprehended, must necessarily compel our assent to the historicity of that Communion and Revelation, which afterwards transpired on the Mount of Transfiguration, as an occurrence both possible and reasonable. It also renders the Church a visibly increasing structure, patent to every eye, every time a John leans upon Jesus' bosom; every time a sorrowing spirit, struggling in its Gethsemane, bleeds under the agony of the submitting cry, 'Not my will, but Thine be done.'

Following Jesus, Peter was thus the first among men to know the Father in a true Life-Communion, and so also was the first after Jesus to enter the Church, the 'Ecclesia,' the spiritual 'Council'; or the Communion of Heaven and Earth. Jesus being the Door, Peter thus received the Keys, the precedent favour of entrance, to the presence of the Father. From this point onwards the development of the doctrine of Jesus among all the nations of the earth was potentially assured. The seed had given substantial proof of its vitality, and its fuller growth in that Tree, under whose branches all peoples would finally lodge, could only be a matter of time. The Father-God had been *seen* as a Man among men.

This crisis in the career of Jesus may fitly be regarded as the point of incidence where His system of Life cuts into the arteries of Human society, and begins to flood the world with His Spirit. From this verge of history, all future human conditions of soul and body, religion and civilization, Church and State, diverge henceforth towards the lofty Ideals which came down from heaven in His birth. The 'principalities and powers' which, from the beginning, had dominated the hearths and homes, the temples and thrones, of the nations, received the first intimations of that fate which meant for them deposition and destruction. The 'Fire' was already kindled in whose flame not only kingdoms and dynasties would perish, but in which also the 'prince of this world'; the false conceptions of the Eternal One; ideals of Messiahship; parading Priest-

hoods; and every lying way of human existence, should be ultimately consumed.

The immediate influence of this event upon Jesus Himself was to intensify and indefinitely enlarge the area of His joys and sorrows. The birth of Peter into the Father-Life gave to Jesus those feelings of bliss and bitterness which the newly-made mother experiences in the advent of her firstborn. And the bliss may be allowed to have culminated on the Mount of Transfiguration, and the bitterness in the Garden of Gethsemane. Between these two unparalleled extremes a lava-like panorama of intensified emotions, grievous or joyful, extends itself over His life and teaching, and the episodes which intervene.

But it does not escape us that whether we are on the Mountain, or in the Garden, or waiting among minor intercalated incidents, the chief feature throughout is the larger disclosure of the Father's presence, and the keener realization by Jesus of His Hand in the destiny of His Son. Every word as well as every incident following Peter's confession, throbs with a deeper passion and glows with greater energy; and it is the nearness of the Father in the faith and acts of Jesus that gives the reinforcing power. Forward from this section of His ministry, Jesus Himself decreases by the increase of the Father. His pre-eminence is greater to the world but less pronounced to Himself. In actual refulgence, the Father becomes, in His system of truth, the Sun; while Jesus, in His own eyes, assumes a fainter form of the Father's reflection. The personality of the Father, as well

as *His* Will, *His* Love, *His* Spirit, and *His* commanding power over the Work to be finished, receive from Jesus a more clearly emphatic homage and a higher niche of importance than ever before. The Father-Life has indeed truly entered into men, and Jesus seems to feel that He is no longer its sole repositant. The Spirit which now rises on the world is the Spirit which proceedeth forth from the Father; and now and for evermore He, as the active Agent of regeneration, must take the things of Jesus, and show them unto men. Thereby the revelation of the Father is revealed as the future 'work' to be 'finished.'

But it is also by rising on the wings of this same Spirit that Jesus is enabled to send a further glance into both the Past and the Future. He now looks around upon the world as it has been and as it shall be. His historical imagination exalts itself on loftier pinions both as gazing backwards over the long course of His Nation's iniquity, presently to be summed up in the doom of Jerusalem (Matt. xxiii.), and as foreseeing and outlining through the blood-mist of that coming cataclysm the end of the world itself, and His own triumphant return to separate the destinies of men (Matt. xxiv. xxv.). His insistence, also, on the spirit and practice which He expects from His followers seems to be from this time more sharply and more eagerly defined. He upbraids them, for example, for not only lacking the faith which exorcises 'demons,' but that which finds the removal of mountains an easy undertaking. Further, the spirit of the child is more peremptorily pressed upon them, and For-

givenness unto infinity laid down as the guiding 'Law' of His Church.

Moreover, the consciousness of His own approaching tragedy falls with an ever-deepening gloom athwart His soul, and gives to all He says and does a certain nervousness and tension not so apparent in Him heretofore. His parables reiterate the necessity for watching and alertness, for guarding against the influences of riches, and for finishing the labours in the 'vineyard.' He Himself feels more and more straitened until the 'cup' is drunk, and His 'baptism' accomplished. What had been realized in Peter seems but to whet in Himself a burning desire that the Building so begun should show a fuller concrete promise in the ampler enlargement of its Apostolic foundations. The Supper Discourses are almost painfully tense with this anxiety. He sees the floods of darkness and distrust descending which are to trouble and sweep afar from Him His little band, and the portents appear to presage also a speedy end to His 'Church' almost on the morn of its advent. Nothing, indeed, seemed so hopeless, in the embittered entanglements of the Betrayal, as the possibility of 'finishing,' under such circumstances, and with the material at His command, that august 'Work' which the Father had sent Him to do.

CHAPTER XIV

GETHSEMANE

AN unscientific theology, importing its facts and theories from the Old Testament, has viewed this dark and sombre period in the experience of Jesus as the fateful 'Hour' when He was called upon to meet the fearful wrath of the Eternal God on account of a world's sin, and to writhe under the long pent-up vengeance which was due the demoniacal intrusion of Evil into God's Universe. He who, thrice in a bloody agony, pleaded with the Father that this 'Hour' might pass from Him, is held at the same time as being most enthusiastically willing to accept the scourging Rod as a sinless Substitute for guilty Man!

The beautiful figure of Jesus, as seen in the Garden and on the Cross, suits ill to be clothed in such a meretricious dress of grovelling fears and lurid superstitions. According to the facts set before us, and His own declarations, His sufferings derived their poignancy from three sources: (1) From the active hatred of the religious people of His own nation; (2) from the

incohesive, luke-warm, and doubting state of His apostolic following; and (3) from the 'Forsaking' of the Father, which He seems to have partly realized through the two other causes.

We cannot think that He required any inspired 'revelation' to enable Him to foresee and foretell that from the Jews, and His own race generally, He must face a fatal opposition. But it was from and through His immediate disciples that the severest pang was to come, for it is ever the best beloved that can deal the deepest wound. Yet it was not till the very night of the Passover that He felt this sorrow in its fulness, though the 'Cup' He drank, and the 'Baptism' He was baptized withal, had been life-long and continuous experiences, progressive with His days and years. The three parts of the tragedy—the betrayal by Judas, the Garden, and the Cross,—constituted for a time a raging whirlpool in which seethed those wild currents of passion which had hitherto foamed harmlessly though menacingly around Him, or coiled unseen in the murk of their own deeps. The cry, 'My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me?' (if we may use what seems to be the better authenticated version), is clearly the outcome of an interpretative consciousness partly based on the historical experiences which He then endured. All this appears more credible when we consider the case on a wider plane of contemplation.

Jesus had early awakened to realize His doom in Jerusalem. From the epoch-time when Peter confessed Him to be the 'Son of the Living God,'

He 'began to show unto His disciples how that He must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up' (Matt. xvi. 21). He never again freed Himself from this menacing horror. He talks of it on the Mount of Transfiguration (Matt. xvii. 1-8; Luke ix. 31), and when He is told of the Baptist's murder He avows, 'Even so shall the Son of Man also suffer of them' (Matt. xvii. 12). As He wanders afterwards in Galilee He tells the same weird tale in His disciples' ears. His followers were slow to understand Him, but when He had repeatedly rehearsed the prophecy, they began to comprehend what it meant, for it is said, 'They were exceeding sorry' (Matt. xvii. 23). It was to grave a matter, however, to be left in uncertainty. Still more emphatically He states it again to them. He almost gives the occasion sacramental dignity. For as He 'was going up to Jerusalem, He took the Twelve disciples apart, and in the way He said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief priests and scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him unto the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify, and the third day He shall be raised up' (Matt. xx. 17-19).

In every repetition of the prophecy He dwells upon His death by violence. But there is no expression of dread. There is not even an anticipation that sorrow can come to Him by these agencies. Neither is there the faintest allusion to these coming sufferings as substitutionary for sin.

The thought is not even suggested. Moreover, it does not appear that He had the remotest suspicion that any one of His disciples was to be implicated as the cause of these sufferings. We have, indeed, John's own opinion that Jesus knew from the beginning who should betray Him (vi. 64; xiii. 2). But Jesus Himself never hints at any betrayal by a disciple, until the hour when He ate with them the Last Supper, and said, 'Verily, I say unto you, One of YOU shall betray Me' (Mark xiv. 18). He does not specify the Agent of His betrayal through all His previous warnings regarding it. This fact is an important one.

For it is only when He does specify the Agent that we are summoned for the first time into the presence of His grief and dread. The iron then enters His soul, and there is no sorrow like unto His sorrow. But it is evident that bodily pain and death have no place in the affliction of His spirit. His real woe springs from profounder contemplation of the rending of His 'Church': from the awful rupture from Himself and from the Father-Life and Communion which is disclosed so abruptly to Him among His disciples.

Indeed, the mere prevision of a violent death, whose ghastly lineaments He so carefully particularizes to His Apostles, never once evokes from Him a single sentiment of self-pity or self-com-miseration. In every instance save one, He reiterates the good cheer that on the third day He should rise again. Behind and beyond death there was for Him no dark unbroken bank of unrelieved darkness which renders it so terrible to

poor mortals. His Infinite was not shut in front of Him.

This is stamped on the face of the facts. He boldly sets out on the journey to Jerusalem under the menace of His convictions of death by violence. But there is no symptom of sorrow until He actually learns that one of His disciples will betray Him. The shadow darkens still further when He perceives that notwithstanding positive assertions to the contrary, *all* His chosen ones will abandon Him, and leave Him alone. 'All ye shall be offended in Me this night,' 'Ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone.' 'Yet,' He could say, with a lofty hope, 'I am not alone, because the Father is with Me.' He also seems to think that the Father will avert such an 'Hour,' and pass this 'Cup' from Him. He is sustained in this hope until all prayer is in vain, and Gethsemane determines for Him that the Father wills Him to drink the Cup. Then an awful solitude envelops His spirit. The Father also has 'forsaken' Him! He is alone. There is no communion with man, neither is there communion with His Father.

But sin is nowhere present as the cause of His grief, valuing the term 'Sin' here as given by the creeds of Christendom. The stab of the 'Hour' lies in the sundering from Himself of both man and God. And in this experience, if we can receive it, lies the true 'Hell,' of which those depicted by Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton, are but ruddy caricatures. It must ever remain a matter of the deepest thankfulness, also, that

despite the dark and merciless testimony of all the ages, Jesus found a path out of it into the clear day of triumphant life and eternal bliss.

The turning point is when He becomes assured that it is the Father's Will that He should drink the 'Cup.' He is then once more in full communion with the Father. He was not so while He prayed with a blood intensity to have the 'Cup' removed. He was only in *communication* with the Father. We must admit, if we are not to outrage every canon of thought, that Jesus desired what, on the testimony of His own statement, the Father did not grant to Him. The Two Wills were in solicitative opposition, and not in perfect communion. But there is no shadow of sin in such an attitude, for there is no resistance. Jesus submits at once to the negation of His request thrice urged under agony. And as soon as He does so, He again feels the supreme joy of doing the Will of the Father. With the conviction that the 'Cup' is His Father's gift, all His unwillingness vanishes. He stands as formerly erect and calm. There is no further indication of sorrow. All that ends with His words to His weary Three. 'Sleep on now and take your rest.' The rupture of the Church cannot now be averted. The Sundering is accomplished. Nor watching nor prayer can avail. 'The Son of Man is betrayed.' 'The hour is come.' What alone remains to be done, is to obey the Father. 'Arise, let us be going; the Cup which My Father hath given Me, shall I not drink it?' It is this resolution that guides Him out of the shades of

the perishing. 'I will arise and go' with 'My Father.'

There is no further suggestion whatever, either from Himself or from the writers of the Four Gospels, that He suffered in any shape or form after He rose above the agonies of Gethsemane. If we except the commonplace 'I thirst,' there is no hint from Him between the Garden and the Tomb, that He felt even bodily discomfort. We must assume that being a man, He did suffer pain. But it is never betrayed. With the Communion of God and Man once more restored to Him, all else falls into inconsequence. And that He was once more in full communion with both is testified (1) by His acquiescence in the Father's will, and (2) in His sympathetic conviction that though His beloved Three were outwardly weak there still remained in them a willing spirit. All was not lost. The flax yet smoked; the reed was only bruised, not broken. He felt He could count on their obedience. Therefore, He said, 'Arise, let us go.'

Every step in the terrible tragedy enacted from that moment supports this view. His loathsome treatment by priest and people, by civilian and soldier, onwards to the Cross, shows Him, by contrast, brave, submissive, self-reliant, undemonstrative, and clean of all excitement or passion. His own fearful bodily trials are forgotten in healing the ear of Malchus, in comforting the weeping daughters of Jerusalem, in cementing a sonship and motherhood for Mary and John, and in lifting up the hope of a blessed future for

the thief crucified at His side. Nay, everything in His demeanour denotes a restrained feeling of triumph in Him, and most certainly, a fathomless, inexhaustible energy, mental and moral.

This stands out clearly in His dauntless bearing before both sacred and secular authorities, when He is placed at the bar of their tribunals. 'Tell us,' demanded the High Priest, 'whether Thou be the Christ, the Son of God.' Jesus at once asserts His royal eminence and claim, though He must have known that in doing so His life was put in deadly hazard. 'Thou hast said, nevertheless I say unto you, Henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of Heaven.' This transcended all expectations of the 'Messiah's' power. He is no less majestic before Pilate. As He is pressed with questions concerning His kingship, He explicitly avows that His kingdom is not of this world, but still claims all that Kingdom has to yield up to anyone. 'Thou sayest that I am a King'—yea, born to the highest office of bearing witness to the truth (John xviii. 37). In both instances, He fearlessly and royally absorbs whatever place or honour their acceptance of Him as their 'Messiah,' or successor to the throne of David would have brought to Him, and in both instances excels their 'Messiah's' place and eminence. And He does so without hesitation, or dread of the consequences which such rashness might provoke from the zealots of the Sanhedrin or the myrmidons of Cæsar. The dread of a violent death at the hands of either Jew or Roman has neither shadow

nor substance in His mind or mien. And the solitary suggestion of suffering given us, after these events, in the cry 'My God, My God, why didst Thou forsake Me,' refers evidently back to Gethsemane, and not to His actual experiences on the Cross.

The agony of Jesus is then throughout a mental and spiritual one. The thought of death is not an element in it. It arose from the perishing of love and communion of which death itself is but a shadow. The first point will perhaps be granted. The *reason* and *cause* of His agony will not be so easily conceded to us. The difficulty of the Christian Church, in the past, has always been to account for His sufferings unless SIN were made the base of the problem; and this concession is, for all reasoning men, fast verging towards an impossibility. It has for ages been assumed that His 'Cup' was of God's own filling with God's own wrath, in order to vindicate before the Universe His eternal 'justice and judgment' because of the Sin of Man, and the dominion of Evil. This has been declared as the bedrock of the Christian Religion, and the fundamental doctrine of its truth. So long indeed as we admit the Apostolic teaching in the matter as an infallible testimony, together with the general assent and consent of the Historical Church as corroborating that testimony, the problem must be allowed to rest finally on the basis of Sin. But the most fatal obstacle in the way of accepting this position is the fact that Jesus Himself has nowhere in His Life, or Teaching, laid the foundation for such a super-

structure of thought and belief. The statements from Himself upon which such a System of Faith might possibly be reared are confessedly scanty, and, as we have tried to show, before they can be admitted to the general religious intelligence, have to be irrationally interpreted apart from the overwhelming mass of His Works and Words, and His central message of the Divine Fatherhood. The very fact that this central Message of the Fatherhood obtains such feeble placement in the creeds of Christendom, is of itself suggestive of some discord; and suspiciously implies a want of harmony between what He has taught and what His devout followers have understood of His teaching.

It appears to be an axiomatic truth that every doctrine calling itself of Jesus should be in perfect accord with His nature and character, life and example, words and works. Every drop of water in the ocean must be held as influenced and determined, in its place and in its functions, by the main tidal current which flows round the world. And a great soul-crisis, such as Jesus passed through, should not be considered as intelligibly explained except as it is in fullest concordance with the sublime principles which He proclaimed, the lofty purity of His unique life, the consuming purpose which in Him rose above death, and that masterful message of the Father-God which it was His meat and drink to reveal to the world. These principles, that purity, purpose, and message, determine themselves, we are humbly convinced, not on the narrow issue involved in the conception

of Sin, but on the grand fact of the Father-God; and it is here that we must find the secret of His sorrow in the Upper Chamber, His agony in Gethsemane, and the transcendent triumph which He wrested from the Cross. We cannot interpret Jesus' life and death except in the light of the most powerful ideals which He had at heart; and we can understand His joys or His sorrows only when we have realized the things upon which He set the highest importance, and in which His whole being was engrossed.

His highest ideal undoubtedly springs out of His conception of the Father-God as the Supreme Excellence. His desire for Man henceforward soars far beyond the mere judicial though sympathetic separation of Man from his sins. It is His dream that man should become like this Father-God. 'Perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect.' This is the passion of His life, and determines all His thoughts and actions. It forms the central light in His great Prayer, 'that they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us.' No Ideal born on earth out of the human soul approaches near to this one. It sums up all possible excellence for Man, here or Hereafter. Jesus actually sets before Him the conformity of man, not merely to the conduct, but to the Being of the Father-God.

Again, the path leading upward to this realization of Father-Being is built out of Love: Life being the form of Love in its necessary activity and externalization. The absolute necessity of His

new 'Commandment,' 'Love one another,' is consequently peremptory in His System. The loving communion of man with man, and of man with the Father-God, follows as the most precious relationship in Earth or Heaven, in the estimation of Jesus. His joy, therefore, joy of the highest, will flow from its consummation, and sorrow the deepest will rend His bosom when this relationship is ruptured. We believe that this rupture took place on the night of His betrayal, and was the sole cause and reason of His agonies.

We humbly venture to maintain that this general position is fully sustained by all that has been recorded of similar displays of His sorrow, such as, for example, at the Tomb of Lazarus; as also by the Parables which have for their burden the elucidation of His loftiest ideals; as well as by the reiterated conceptions which He sets forth regarding the Supreme Bliss, or what is called 'Heaven,' and the Supreme Woe, or 'Hell.' The sundering of man from man, and man from God the Father, is also the belt of darkness which everywhere lies across the incandescent resplendence of the unparalleled Discourse, or Discourses, at the Last Supper (John xiii.-xvii.).

First. Jesus at the Tomb of Lazarus.

Let us bear in view, then, that His repeatedly expressed Ideal of Perfect human existence was not that all should have pardon of sin merely, but that 'all should be One,' as He Himself was One with the Father (John xvii. 2, 21, 22, 23). The spirit of a child in man, and the Spirit of the Father blending with that Child-Spirit in one Life-

and-Love Communion, was the essence of that 'Ecclesia,' or Church, to which He strove to give actual and historical embodiment on the earth. But both at Bethany, and on the night of His Betrayal, this His dearest desire was dashed to the ground, and its resuscitation rendered to all appearance impossible.

It is indeed noticeable that the prelude to both narratives moves to the same dominant note. And it seems to make all His subsequent troubles in either case perfectly intelligible. For Bethany we have—'Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus' (John xi. 5). Then for the Last Supper,—'Jesus knowing that His hour was come that He should depart out of this world unto the Father, having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them unto the end,' or, as the marginal reading gives it, 'to the uttermost' (John xiii. 1). In both cases, it is the depth of His love that is the principal feature, and suggests a measure for His after agonies, if we remember that the future realization of His great Ideal-Church on the earth, or Conformity by Man to the Father-Being of the Eternal, depended on the continued faithfulness of these loved ones.

Now, in the case of Lazarus (John xi.), there can be no doubt that the source of the anguish which He evinced even to tears was caused by the sundering of that sympathetic Love-Communion between Himself and the Family at Bethany, which was so suddenly and unexpectedly disclosed to Him. A superficial exegesis blunderingly attributes His tears to Lazarus' death, and to His

sympathy with the weeping sisters. In every instance of suffering, all hearts may always rely on the sympathy of not only Jesus, but the Father; but such an interpretation utterly fails in this case to meet the demands of the problem here presented to us. Death never brought grief to Jesus, and He reproved sorrowing over the dead wherever He met it. Raising Jairus's daughter, and His 'Weep not' to the Widow of Nain, and His 'Weep not for Me' to the crowd, as He went to death, will be recalled in this connection. Can we also believe that He knew of the ineffable glory into which Lazarus had passed, and still made pretence of grieving for him? Can we believe that He Himself might have prevented his death? that also by a word He might have called him back from the dead, and yet shed bitter tears over his loss? Jesus had met death before, in far more pitiable circumstances, and betrayed no emotion of sorrow; choosing rather to consider it not death, but simply 'Sleep.' The truth regarding His tears at the grave of Lazarus lies in the fact that He was disappointed and indignant. His attitude throughout the Scene is, as anyone may see at a glance, one of reproof and directive instruction, rather than of approving pity and consolation. His groaning in the spirit (John xi. 33) did not necessarily imply sorrow. He wept, indeed, but every passion of the soul vents itself in tears, as every wind pours rain. The marginal words are perhaps to be preferred. They are certainly more expressive of the true state of His mind, viz. 'He was moved with indignation in the spirit' (v. 33),

and again, 'Being moved with indignation in Himself' (v. 38). He was certainly far from being in a mood of sympathy with the sisters. His tears are always assumed to mean this, but nothing either in His words or manner sustains the assumption.

The whole scope of the narrative shows that the broken confidence, the ruptured love prevailing in every heart where He had expected the deepest faith, was the true aggravating element in His indignant tearfulness. All the Apostles had abandoned trust in Him after He fled from before the stoning of the Jews (John x. 31, 39, 40; xi. 8). When He heard of Lazarus' death, He saw the opportunity to win them back again to allegiance. He said, 'I am glad for your sakes that I was not there, *to the intent ye may believe*' (xi. 15). They made no protest to the contrary. Between Him and them all true communion was practically gone. Both sides accepted the ugly truth.

But He could still rely on the beloved Three at Bethany! Faith was yet on the earth. It was the last citadel, however, as we ought to remember, for faith in Him, such as He desired, existed nowhere else. And thus He came to Bethany. Alas! Faith in Himself was here also found sickening unto extinction. The Apostles had doubted His power and wisdom in the weakness He displayed in flying from the bellicose Jews (xi. 8), and the sisters seemed not able to confide in that love and power which were so tardy to help in distress. Covertly they upbraided Him. 'If Thou hadst been here, my brother had not

died.' Jesus was regarded from a cold distance by both His Apostles and the Sisters, and placed in an atmosphere of distrust. There is an implication of deception in their tone. 'Was He the expected Messiah, then? One to deliver us at last from all foreign and domestic discomforts?' The first wind of adversity had rent their trust in Him. In the mind of Jesus, on the other hand, there arose the thought, evidently, 'What! am I to save from murderous stones and sickness merely? Do ye not yet understand?' And thereupon He sought to shed a higher light on His mission to them and to the world. 'I am the Resurrection and the Life.' He strives to reinstate their souls in faith and love, and declares His transcendence over death. He asks a sign of hope from them. 'Believest thou this?' and receives the wavering 'Yea, Lord, I have believed,' which is immediately falsified by outbursts of weeping and despairing shrieks at the grave. This Messiah, then, was fraudulent like all the others! And so He saw His house, His little Church of human hearts, bound by the Father-Love, go down before His eyes; and, being built on sand, great was the fall of it. He was troubled. He groaned. He had indignation in His spirit. He wept bitterly. He really stood alone upon the dark, unbelieving, unloving earth, after all His teaching and mighty works (Matt. xi. 20). The Jews added the bitter taunt that He who had opened the eyes of the blind had left to sickness and death the friend whom He had professed to love so fervently. Was not He a fraud?

Nowhere on the horizons of humanity was there one person who in verity held faith-communion with Himself. 'All had forsaken' Him, as truly as on the night of His betrayal by Judas. The only soul in genuine sympathy with Him seems to have been Lazarus, and he was shut off by the gravestone. To Jesus, this condition of things must have brought the most poignant sorrow. True, it is difficult for us to place the cause of His passion on this high ground. We cannot realize His agony until we realize His Ideal of life. And men in general, and Christendom in particular, has never experienced indignation or agony from the same cause which put bitterness greater than death into His 'Cup.' The Fatherhood of God, and the Brotherhood of Men, have never been but soulless and inactive sentiments throughout the history of the world. To Jesus, these things were of more value than all the world itself. He urged men to remember and act upon these principles even if they should have to leave the altar and the temple behind them to fulfil the duty (Matt. v. 23-24). But while Church History records, often with vaunting periods, many instances of men leaving altar and church to emphasize their passionate dissent from their brother, her chronicles are fewer of hurried departures from the same holy places in order to fall on the neck of the estranged one in reconciled communion of heart. The Church has oftener displaced this ideal of Jesus, in order to exalt a priesthood, a dogma, a canon, a system of government, or some beggarly punctilio about clothes. The brother-

hood of Man has been too often left to the 'prodigals' of the human race,—to the Rousseaus and Burnsés, for example,—and the Church has passed by on the other side.

Nevertheless this Communion of Souls in the Father's love, and this leaning on His own bosom, was the true and only Church that Jesus knew, and when He failed to maintain it, even with the 'two or three,' He knew that He had also failed in everything worth living to accomplish. To save from pain, from sickness, from the murderous stone of the persecutor, from the prick of conscience, from the burden of sin, even from death itself, were negative forms of blessing. All these could be but relative, and contingent, and ultimately reach a point of exhaustion. But Communion with the Father, and with Himself, man with man, man with God, was a blessing illimitable, and inexhaustible, for which the grave had no horizons, and which moved to the height of God's own nature and conduct. We are not surprised that Jesus wept. We are not astonished that He was indignant in Himself. His great work was being shattered before His eyes, and, doubtless, it was the last hope in Him that urged Him to call back the dead, if by that means faith might once more be on the earth, and His divine Ideal of life once more established among men. This purpose was later clearly at work in bringing Himself out of the Unseen to His disciples after Crucifixion. In every instance it is to beget faith.

Second. Jesus' Ideal in His Parables.

In most, and, certainly, in the greatest of these

parables, the shadow of His sorrow ever hovers over the sundering of man from man, and symbolically, of the child-man from his Father-God. Whenever He touches upon that fact we seem to hear Him weeping inwardly. The parables of the Lost Money, the Lost Sheep, the Lost Son;—what other truth do they illuminate so clearly as woe of sunderment from the human interest, the human affections, and the human heart? Guilt is never mentioned. Sin is never attributed. Atonement for guilt is not even alluded to.

It is Separation which also gives the source of that sorrow so profound in all Nature, in the parable of the Sower. The mother earth is divided from her child-seed by the hard path, by the rock, by the thorns. For this reason the seed is 'lost.' So likewise when the grain of wheat does not fall into the ground, it 'abides alone.' And this separation-for-self is, as we shall see below, when we come to consider Jesus' ideal 'Heaven' and 'Hell,' the conception by which He constantly defines the ultimate woe for man.

Again, in the parable of the Good Samaritan, it is not the sin of man that is emphasized, or the broken moral law, but the awfulness of sundered sympathies. Sorrow rises not from any breach of moral law, but from the separation which has broken the bond of human life, by which all men are knit to each other, and to the Great Father-God. The lesson of the Leaven is the hopeful opposite of this. There is at work in the world, an irresistible influence which must at last consolidate all human interests into One, which in Love

will merge itself into the one Love and one Life of Heaven. The hid treasure, the pearl of great price, are nothing until they have come into sympathetic possession and communion with man. And in no case is the 'Kingdom of Heaven' something to be wiped out, such as 'debt' or 'sin,' but always something that must be gained, possessed, on the plane of Father-life and Father-love. The chief point in such parables, for example, as the Unmerciful Debtor (Matt. xviii. 23-35), is not the woe involved in the debt, but the awfulness of human communion 'perished' and 'dead' in the human heart. This also is the true key to the difficult parable of the Unjust Steward (Matt. xviii. 23-35). To keep in touch with our fellowmen; to gain the brother, and hold communion with him, is the first duty in human existence, and not merely to maintain an upright character in the eyes of the world on the basis of a conventional moral law. 'Make friends' with *all*. Aim to be *one with man*, as Jesus is one with the Father. All else comes after that. The Publican is justified more than the Pharisee, because, notwithstanding the devotions of the latter, the former possessed the better spirit of child-like communion with the Father-God.

Third. The same deep note of Communion and Oneness, the joy of its realization and the unutterable agony of its rupture, stands out vividly in the teaching of Jesus regarding 'Heaven' and 'Hell,' or, what may be taken as His conception of Supreme Bliss and Supreme Woe. These sublime yet awful conceptions have in all ages

attracted the imaginative powers of the loftiest minds. No great Epic leaves them untouched. We are convinced that, as compared with Jesus, all the great poets have failed to trace the secret springs of both the highest happiness and the deepest woe to their well-head.

‘Heaven’ and ‘Hell,’ to Jesus, have no reference, as with the poets, to mere *places*. The Oneness of persons in love, is the ground-fact of His ‘Heaven.’ There is no such thing as ‘Heaven’ apart from beings, or a ‘Hell’ that might possibly exist empty of any one in it. Without hearts beating together in one life and one love; or sundered in the death of sympathy; neither ‘heaven’ nor ‘hell’ has existence in the doctrine of Jesus. He does not promise heaven to His Apostles, but ‘Where I am.’ Jesus Himself does not ‘go to heaven,’ but ‘to the Father.’ *It is the relation of persons to persons, and not the relation of persons to any place*, which constitutes His ‘Heaven’ or His ‘Hell.’ ‘*With Me in paradise*’ He says to the Thief; though it is helpful to us in our weakness to think also of a happy Place. When the Prodigal is folded into the loving bosom of his father, ‘heaven’ is created for him, but not till then. So also there is joy in the presence of the angels when one repents; that is, when one not only realizes the wrong, but returns to the point where the wrong first began, viz. in the separation from the father. Jesus, consequently, makes ‘heaven’ to the beggar Lazarus (Luke xvi. 19-31), not merely a being carried by angels to a place, but being laid in

Abraham's bosom. The 'bosom' symbolizes that 'oneness' with the Father-God which Jesus regarded as the ultimate blessing for mankind. Hence Lazarus is not carried to Abraham's house, or into his presence, or laid at his feet, though these honours would have been received as superlative joys by any Hebrew, but to his 'bosom,' as being the sole place of love for him who was a true child of his father. And to enter 'heaven' is, according to Jesus, to realize the relationship of the child as one with the Father-God; and both in the case of the prodigal son, and Lazarus, this relationship is consummated by being folded to the child's only true place, the bosom of the father.

'Hell' is the negation of this conception. The child, the 'son' is sundered from the father's bosom. Jesus interprets all His Woe-words by this idea. 'Lost,' 'Dead,' 'Perish,' 'Weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth,' 'Outer darkness,' 'Cast forth as a branch and are burned,' 'This flame,' and others, are all, when properly taken out to their ultimate values, terms which mean Separation from the bosom-source of child-life, child-love, and child-joy. 'This my son was dead,' when he was sundered from me, the father; 'and is alive again,' now that he has come to my heart: 'he was lost (then), and is (now) found' (Luke xv. 24). Perhaps, the 'hell' of Jesus is best described in His own words at the Day of Judgment,—'Depart from Me.' This is His ideal of all woe, and the root of the ultimate grief.

Neither is this 'Hell,' perhaps, to be held as unending, 'eternal,' 'everlasting.' This is not

implied as taught in the 'great gulf fixed' of the parable of the Rich man and Lazarus. It is only given there as a truth, that there is no way of returning to that service of man by man which is demanded in the cry 'Send Lazarus.' It is vain to seek or to give service to the brother after death has been experienced. There is no return of the yesterdays, nor of the gracious opportunities of earthly existence. But the 'Gulf fixed' between man and man, between Dives and the Two men 'afar off,' in happiness, does not necessarily include also a statement of a similar 'gulf' being fixed between any spirit and the Father-God. The way Jesus found out of His 'Hell' in Gethsemane was equally open to the rich man, as it must ever be to all men. Jesus, as we have tried to prove, found the end of all suffering and sorrow in accepting the 'Cup' as one given from the Father-God's will and hand, and so entering into child-communion with Him. The Rich Man is, however, rebellious in his 'hell,' and desires not to submit, but to be obeyed. The 'Cup' given him by the Father, should not he have drunk it, whatever it contained? Man must ever remain the Father's child throughout the everlasting ages. This bond never can be cut. And however deep the 'Cup' of bitterness may be which He presents to our lips, *the Oneness with Him, so important to Jesus, can always be effected by accepting it as Jesus has shown us*, instead of rebelliously clamouring for our own easements and gratifications at the hands of those whom we have chosen to spurn. There is a way out of 'hell' to 'heaven,'

testified by Jesus' own experience; and the Infinitude which He presents to our view, is bounded on its utmost verge by light and love, and not by 'death' and darkness. The 'lost' may become the 'found'; the 'dead' may become the 'alive.' The grain of wheat, though it may not touch ground, and abide 'alone' (which was the condition of the Rich Man in 'hell'), and though cut off from all finite conditions of earth and human agency, may yet find, by perfect submission, a perfect communion with the Father-existence in the eternal spaces. *To accept the 'Cup' and to drink whatever the Father-God has put into it*, must ever be, as Jesus Himself had to realize, the grand path of the Eternal, and the sure way to His bosom. The child comes then to the Father; goes with the Father; and the Father is also revealed to the child; and in the At-onement of mutual love and life, all sin and sundering elements disappear.

Fourth. The Discourses at the Last Supper.

The sorrow of separation from His disciples flows through these utterances (John xiii.-xvii.), like the harsh murmur of a brook in an otherwise pleasant valley. But the thought of separation is confined to the disciples. Between Himself and the Father there is as yet the most untroubled sympathy. Separation from the Father is not yet in His 'Cup.' Gethsemane is not in these discourses. His Going away to the Father gives *them* their sorrow (xvi. 6-22), their 'cup'; and *their* separation from Himself is *His* rankling wound. 'Behold, the hour cometh, yea, is come,

that ye shall be scattered, every man to his own, and shall leave Me alone; yet I am not alone, *because the Father is with Me* ' (xvi. 32). There is no mention of Sin being any burden upon His heart, or any work before Him such as bearing the sin of the world through God's wrath, in order to vindicate His 'Justice and Judgment.' It is a grief which rises from another cause, and has reference not to broken commandments, but to broken unity of love and life, and that oneness of being, so passionately longed for in His pleading, 'Abide in Me, and I in you.' Such passages as John xiii. 10, 18, 21-30, 33, 36-38; xiv. 1-5, 16-19, 25-31; xv. 1-7, 22-26; xvi. 1-6, 16-22, 31; xvii. 1, 11-13, amply sustain this interpretation.

But now, another and a far more piercing grief enters into His experience with the 'Forsaking' of the Father. Theologians have assumed this to have been the 'Hour' when upon His innocent soul were poured the full vials of wrath and curse due from the Eternal One to the sins of the world.

The central fact which gives us the key to the problem is that Jesus thrice in bloody agony prayed the Father to have His will done, and that thrice the Father desired His own will done instead. This is a stupendous fact, and, clearly, it divides the grief of Bethany, and that of Judas' betrayal, from the agony of Gethsemane, by far other and more terrible concomitants of rupture and desertion. But the principle running through all these experiences is the same in kind though of deeper degrees of intensity, viz. sundered sympathies of heart, ruptured oneness of will and life. All the

other griefs of Jesus were caused by the actions of those around Him in His generation, *but His agony in the Garden of Gethsemane was due to His own initiative.* Deep called unto Deep, and the voices were not in harmony. For the first and perhaps only time, He desired His own will done. To do the will of the Father was hitherto all His desire. Now He stood in an endless solitude. He was alone. The series of facts is indisputable. Jesus' generation denied Him; His own chosen Disciples denied Him; and His own Father-God in the Garden denied Him. He was forsaken. It was for Him the hour and power of darkness. He sinned not, for He resisted not. But the Two Wills of Father and Son were not in unison. And this really was the fierce flame of torment that scorched His sensitive nature. It is the agony which must always dwarf all others, and its memory to Jesus when hanging on the Cross seems to have been more awful than the presence of a horrible death. It is reasonable that it should have held this place in His feelings, for the deepest sorrows in His heart could only spring from the deepest ruptures in it, viz. the denial of a master-will, and the thwarting of a ruling passion.

Men have hesitated to put Jesus into this position. But we must dare to place Jesus where He places Himself. In the Garden, He bowed His will to that of the Father-God whom He agonizingly solicited, and thus He acknowledged Himself submissive and subordinate to His Father. 'The Father is greater than I' was confessed to

the full. Nowhere is He beheld more like the Child which He declared Himself to be, than in such absolute surrender to the Father, and nowhere does He so powerfully vindicate the truth of His all-life teaching, that He came into this world to reveal, not Himself, but the Father-God, to the souls of men. He also proved for the benefit of a universal hope that through the darkest and most appalling trials of the soul His lofty ideal 'I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into One,' may be fully attained by all; for in the breaking of His own will He found the Will of the Father, and did it. Through the deepest negation of self, as the philosophers might put it, He found the absolute affirmative in the Universal Self. From His weakest hour, from going *with* the Father, submissively, He rose with and into the Eternal Power, and sat on the right hand thereof. He passed forth from 'Hell' into the Bosom of the Father.

Looking back from the sublime height of this experience on the woefulness of human life: on its oceanic miseries daily endured through thousands of years, and yet endured; on the dread possibilities that yawn around the future of mankind; of man's inhumanity to man; we can perceive that this realization in the Garden rendered the prayer of Jesus 'that they may all be one, even as Thou, Father, art in Me,' more than the empty exhalation of an optimistic dream. In the Garden this Ideal was translated into historical fact, and it was made part of human achievement in the same way that all human achievements have been

reached, viz. through laying down life in death; through a suffering surrender of will; through standing ready and willing to give all, if required, yea, even personality, and all, to the Other. When this experience of Jesus becomes in all men a fact of life as it was in His, the Kingdom of the Father will have come on the Earth, and His will then will be done in it, even as it was done in the Garden, and is done in heaven. We shall behold the new heavens and the new earth. For it is manifestly the Truth which all other truths are working in Time to accomplish. It is, in reality, the perpetual miracle that glorifies all history, and constantly evokes our 'special wonder.' Jesus also for the first time revealed the sublime motive underlying all such sorrow, as not merely to give free scope to the exercise of an arbitrary will of the Imperial Being, as all the ancients supposed, but to consummate the nearer communion and blessing of the Eternal Father and His 'beloved' Child. It is a *Father* that gives the cup: should not His children drink it? It *must* be a cup of love. It would appear that change in all things has motion given to it in order to bring this Oneness of the Father-God and His children to an everlasting fixity. The Life and Death of Jesus but symbolize this sundering and uniting of God and man through life and death. It appears, moreover, to be an order of all Being, for the Universal Father-God is ever becoming, and being born through, and growing up, and embodying Himself in all things, seen and unseen. Every life is formed out of it, and passes by means of

it, through days and centuries, to an ever-widening life in and higher communion with the Father-God. It is degrading the 'work' of Jesus to say that, in Gethsemane, He was merely engaged in vindicating God's 'Justice and Judgment' by bearing the wrath which was due to man's transgressions. He was in the flux of a far deeper law than that which refers to conduct and character, good or evil. In the experience of Jesus, we see emerging from the very depth of human wickedness that new life and deeper love which are yet to raise the whole race of man, not merely to a restored immunity from punishment, as is supposed, but to the height of the highest and holiest things in it, the Oneness of man with man, and of all men with the Father.

Perhaps also it was revealed then for the first time to Jesus (for Bethany and Gethsemane must be regarded as stepping-stones in His increasing apprehension of the Father-God), that the nearer man approaches to this likeness to, or Oneness with, the Father, the nearer also must be his sacrifice of life, and of all he is, to that primal sacrifice which the Father Himself has accomplished in begetting from everlasting, the All, His Child, His Universe. And, similarly, Gethsemane proves that the more unwilling we are to drink the Father's 'Cup,' and so be at one with Him, the further do we recede from His perfect communion, and so experience to the measure of our reluctance, that bitterness of separation from Him which is tantamount to a consciousness of being 'forsaken' by Him. In the nature of fact it must

be so, for the 'Cup' which the Father gives, the Father Himself has drunk, and sooner or later, He asks all His begotten to bow their will and drink of it, and be one with Him. In actual substance, it is the loving request to quaff the supreme draught of Life, for although to our poor vision it is laying down Life, it is really 'taking it again' on diviner and ampler and loftier conditions of Being. And we should endeavour to believe that all the experiences of the human race, broadening vast over history, written or unwritten, in endless multiplicity and complexity, (what we call 'Sin' not excluded from the sum of it), are but temporary distractions, transiencies, processes, and 'necessities' in the universal Death-Sacrifice, or 'laying down of life' to 'take it again,' which, in the Order of the Father-God, is as essential to all as to Jesus, to bring it to pass, that all things in heaven and on earth shall be glorified with the Father's own Self, with that glory which all things had with Him before the world was. 'That they may all be one: even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us.'

This all-consuming passion of Jesus is, indeed, whether we consider it on the broad scale of general history, or in the narrower sphere of the Historic Church, the inspiring energy, the tidal force which, patent or latent, runs through every change in the nations; that works beneath every scheme of man; and preserves for the human race its highest hope above and beyond the despairs of a warring world; and which still binds the contending churches of every name with a bond far stronger

than all the rending powers that the sect-creating 'gates of Hades' can bring against it.

The realization of this sublime ideal on earth, and the transfusion of His passion through every human soul, is, as we have tried to show, the true Ecclesia, or 'Church,' of Jesus. It is the spirit of man conforming to the Spirit and Being of the Eternal Father. This is the soaring flame that burns within His words and works, and makes His whole life a death-expiration of love. For this oneness He strove and prayed. For this He, in Gethsemane, trembled and agonized, dreading its destruction in Judas' betrayal, and His disciples' desertion. For this He bowed at last to a cruel death, confident that though not granted to Him in the way He desired, out of this awful 'Cup' a deeper oneness in man and God would be wrought by His shed blood, and be as the drinking of a new wine that maketh glad the heart of man. And every generation since, and every century, and every age, has abundantly justified this profound and childlike faith in the Father's 'Cup' as being not of wrath on account of sin, but of newness of Life for the resurrection of a world from the dead. Jesus has drunk this wine new with men in His Kingdom. Human hearts, doubtless, had known before Jesus' day the comforting satisfaction of sin blotted out through blood-sacrifice, but *His* vision and hope of man they had never seen, nor tasted of His joy and peace in being one with all men in the Father. This is the 'rose of dawn' which God made for Himself out of the soul of Jesus, surrendered in love to Him in the darkness of Gethsemane.

CHAPTER XV

THE IDEAL HUMAN RACE

JESUS was crucified in spirit in the Garden, and in body on the Cross. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so these two events stand related to the ultimate idealization of the human race. As a little child, He makes sublime submission to His Father-God, in the one instance, and, in the other, to Man. And, for this reason, mankind has felt first the subduing influence of the Cross. In the nature of things, it might not be otherwise. The senses first command the things of the soul, before the soul assumes authority over the things of the senses. Men sleep through the awful mystery of the Garden struggle, but are thrown into intense commotion of interest when the hammers smite and the blood flows. Latterly, it is discernible that the Eternal Father has visited His Children in the one scene, the 'prince of this world' in the other. Moreover, driven before the overpowering convictions of all past time, as to the divine demand for blood-sacrifice in order to compass forgiveness of sins, the panics of the universal human heart are more readily satisfied

by the horrors of Calvary,—there is a more vivid sense of expiatory suffering rendered as a sin-compensation to the Deity,—than is given by the transcendent guarantee triumphantly achieved in Gethsemane, of that perfect communion of the Father-God and His Man-Child, which is, at bottom, the goal of all desire, and of that establishment of a Holy Spirit in the earth, which amid wretchedness, cruelty, betrayal, and wildest madness, can yet ‘overcome the world,’ and from the very womb of death beget a perfected human race.

There is evidence that throughout the age-long centuries beyond the Cross, there existed in the heart of mankind a dread, cold and black as the Kaaba stone, that the world might yet sink into wide weltering seas of wickedness, and the imagination of universal man be only evil continually. Even Jesus asked Himself if the Son of Man might yet find faith upon the earth. The highest minds of the race had asked—Would the grand drama of human life yet end well? Faint-hearted and doubting answers reverberated from the prophet-voices of the Hebrew Rolls; from the graveyard of nations where kingdoms and peoples lay overwhelmed in their transgression; from the immortal, yet Fate-darkened tragedies of Greece; and from the sadly-hopeful records of Egypt and the musing East. Was it something of this Spirit of the Past that crushed Jesus also in the Garden for a time? If so, then He was also the first finally to dispel the darkness of its long reign, and out of it to rise in the clear joy of the new-born God-Babe; the

first true promise to Man that not wrath and death, schism and severance of men should ultimately rule the earth, but an enduring communion of Father and Child.

There is no mistaking the nature of the conflict which moved through the Garden scene. It is the sublimest example in universal history of that true tragedy which Hegel has defined as 'a conflict of right with right, not of right with wrong.' And if we regard Gethsemane as illustrating the true tragedy, Calvary can as vividly portray that form of it which moves on lower passions. For in the Garden, the tragedy is one of Right against Right; Theos-Pater against Theos-Monogenes; God-Father against God-Only-Begotten; while the tragedy enacted on Calvary is clearly one of Right against Wrong; the God-Only-Begotten against the godless. The former represents the Eternal Spirit that has been at work in the Universe from the emergence of the Divine Fatherhood; the other, that Spirit which has developed with Man on the narrower plane of Time. In the Garden, we are at the head of all the primal forces that command the Universe, and see evolving energy flowing out of its fountainhead, and the relationship which binds man to God triumphantly crowned; whereas, at Calvary, our impressions are all brought down to the levels of common heroisms, repeated from of old in every noble human experience, and we are forced to behold a mere carnival of barbaric hate, riotous from the furnace of religious prejudice and bigotry, and exulting in consuming an innocent and unresisting Goodness. The will of the Father

is done in the Garden; the will of man at the Cross. Jesus is a God in the one case, and a Hero in the other. But, perhaps it is just for this reason that mankind has worshipped longer, and with deeper emotions, at the Cross, than in Gethsemane; for all religious history maintains that the order of human worship, and the path of the soul, is through the Hero up to the Hero made Divine. Gethsemane lies higher than man has yet attained.

It is from this point that there looms up before our eyes the tragic world-epic, with eighteen hundred years for its staging, of the desertion by the Historic Church of Jesus' Ideal and purpose, as completely as, locally, and in one night, He Himself was deserted by His little band. In truth, the vast height between the Ideal of Jesus and that governing the minds of His Apostles and their generation, was perhaps of wider space than, at such sudden call, they were able to span. From the beginning, we behold a vague power, as from His resurrection, enthralling them, fanning their enthusiasm to the verge of mad fanaticism, and whirling them forward through wild schemes of human thought and action. The strongest spirits among them were yet carried away by the irresistible under-currents of the Jewish Religion. Though far from being disloyal to Jesus, they proved themselves unable to embody His Revelation in human life except through withering Hebrew notions; or to build up His Church save on the straitened foundations of Israelitish nationality; or to set forth its principles and government except by the galling formulæ of the Old

Testament; and during this time of hesitation and spasmodic aggressiveness, the unfortunate Pauline influence entered to give the whole Church a permanent fixity on these sands of the Old Wilderness. The divine Genius of Horeb once more alighted on the Christian Mind, as of old he fell on that of Israel, and, imposing upon it the glamour of Jerusalem, that glory of his strength and his throne of the ages, condensed the Ideal and passion of Jesus within it on the pivotal conception of a 'City.' The Jerusalem without was to furnish, henceforth, ideal walls to the Jerusalem within! All thoughts and conceptions of the perfect life on earth were from this time onward dominated by this civic ideal to be attained for mankind. As we see from such writings as 'Revelation,' and scattered passages throughout the Pauline Epistles, the Eternal World was horizoned and constricted to every Christian believer by the Jerusalem ideal. The Eternal Father, His Son, His Throne, His Redeemed, His Angelic Hosts, and the spiritual realm of all Holiness and Bliss, were confined in thought, and fancifully visualized in every Christian soul, as surrounded by the walls of a Jerusalem which were capable of correct cubic measurement! It became a received opinion that the Father of Jesus could not send down His gifts of eternal love and life to man except under the symbolism of the Jewish Nationality, Jewish Government, and the Jewish Theocracy. The Ideal Church must become an Ideal Jerusalem! The soaring imagination of the author of 'Reve-

lation ' Jerusalemizes Eternity itself, and portrays the Jesus-ideal of perfected man as a golden city of a diviner David! A Citizenship of Man, illustrated on the pattern of Jerusalem, was in the dream of the Early Church to be the grand form and end of perfected human life!

It is this artificiality which stamps the Apostolic conception of the ' Church ' as false and misleading when compared with the simple and natural Ideal of Jesus. But they could not shake themselves free from the shackles of Judaism. The passion of the prophets of old time for the ' city of Zion ' still bowed down the souls of Jesus' disciples. We are not surprised at this phenomenon. No conception of Humanity, either inside or outside of the Hebrew Race, at that time, soared higher than that of the city as a perfected model of Holy Ideal. And thus through the Apostles, the Old Testament conception of holy social human life imposed itself upon the pious imaginations of the Early Fathers, was made spectral and mystical in the book of ' Revelation,' and generalized as a universal dogma by Augustine in his ' City of God.' Its power over the entire Church through its extended history is abundantly attested by almost every notable Christian poem, and every Christian devotional and liturgical work. It is, however, certain that Jesus never regarded His followers as citizens of any City, earthly or heavenly. His Ecclesia, or Church, never was fashioned by Him in such similitude, for the simple reason that the City never gives to the human mind the facts and connotations of that

relationship between man and man and between man and God, which He came into this world to reveal. To be admitted within the walls of a Holy City instead of to the loving embrace of a Father, is to substitute the impersonal for the personal, the dead for the living, the stone for a Father's bosom. Such a conception chills and paralyses the whole organization of Christian Thought and Christian Feeling, and in the end biasses the Christian mind to a false idea of the Church which Jesus through the ages, and by His People, is building up among men. Moreover, it does little to modify the sinister influence of such an Ideal, that in this Vision of Perfected Humanity, the Church is the 'Lamb's Bride,' that the 'Tabernacle of God is with men,' that 'God Himself shall be with them and be their God,' that 'God shall wipe away every tear from their eyes'; for all this was given to the human hope and imagination in the Hebrew Vision, as interpreted by Israel's Seers and Prophets of old time. The ancient Vision was simply modified and transported into the spiritual Hereafter, and the eye of the soul looked before instead of behind. But the Vision was the same. The relation of man to God had no nearer realization. He still dwelt aloof on a *Throne*. The Ideal of the Perfected Life rose only to the old Hebrew levels. The Vision of Jesus had but a meagre share in the 'Church' of the Apostles and the Fathers.

In practical result, consequently, the influence of the Christian Church upon the history of the world has been towards moulding the Human

Race in the past into a world-city, combining in that Ideal all that was spiritual in the Hebrew Sion, and all that was of earthly value in Imperial Rome. The powers of the Christian Pulpit and the Throne of the Empire consequently devoted themselves to creating the Papacy, and enthroning it in the 'Eternal City.' It is difficult to believe that such an Ideal could have found the faintest support among the followers of Jesus, if His conception of Perfected Humanity, as Oneness of the Child-Man with the Father-God, as He Himself was one with the Father, had controlled and created the Christian vision. But doubtless time was required to enable men to break with this Hebrew ideal, as with others imposed from without.

We believe that it was the Ideal of Jesus, ever latent at the heart of things, and leavening the minds of men, that brought forth the disruptive and destructive instrument of the Reformation. The Potter's Wheel, whose revolutions are the centuries, no longer moulds the mind of Christendom after the model of a City. The containing walls have fallen. The Perfect Life of man now aims at a wider social area than the civic ideal affords. The 'Church' of Jesus is a well-spring of life and peace to man, of sacrifice of life through love; and its semblance on earth must ever be fashioned after the realities of the Father's 'House' in heaven. Its externalization in time, its building up into the ways of the nations, its authority over mankind, must likewise be effected by the natural passions and sympathies of affectionate hearts, the simplicities of the home

feelings, the parent's tenderness, the child's devotion, rather than by the force and fierceness of the relentless intellect, the desire of conquest carried out in ecclesiastical conclaves, in schools, and in parliaments, in the discoveries of science and the triumphs of art. This is the Spirit that has now gone forth into the world, and its influence is not confined to the sphere of strictly christian agencies. It is a Spirit that covers the Human Race.

The Ideal of the Hebrew, with that extension of it which aggregated in the Papacy, may now be accepted as a waning vision, doomed sooner or later to pass from the eyes of men forever. But while the Spirit and Ideal of Jesus are claiming the world, it does not follow that the Christian Mind has wholly grasped the fulness of the conception of Jesus. The conception of His Church has indeed gone out into freer skies and unwall'd atmospheres. The 'City' has yielded to the 'Home.' All Christian literature and preaching is now pervaded by this relationship in spiritual things. And the nomenclature is changed because the Christian Ideal is changed. But the question still arises—What particular form of thought and vision has now obtained possession of the Christian World as the one into which, and on which, the Church of Jesus must ultimately cohere and aggregate?

The Geniuses of the Christian Race have looked into the future and have seen the Vision of higher things and have spoken. Tennyson, for example, with the practical instincts of the Teuton, has beheld from afar the coming Parliament of Man,

the Federation of the World. Universal Combination for the Universal Well-Being! This is a lofty vision. Burns, however, standing on a higher principle, and biassed perhaps by a keener Celtic idealism, has viewed this same world-spectacle as one 'when man to man the world o'er shall Brothers be.' Neither expresses the Ideal of Jesus. But each poet has advanced nearer to it. The Ideal-City disappears in the vision of Tennyson, and a Federated Concourse of man takes its place. In the dream of Burns this Federated Concourse becomes a Universal Brotherhood. As against both, the Ideal of Jesus places Man on a far higher plane of relationship than is implied in even Brotherhood. 'AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME' is His Ideal; and Jesus was more than a Brother to the Father-God.

But it is a vast stride towards the truth when the highest Christian Vision has uttered in words an approximation in thought to the Church-Conception which lay in such prayerful desire in the mind of Jesus. And perhaps this Ideal of Human Brotherhood, imperfect though it be, is the most powerful factor in the subconsciousness of our race at this present hour. Benjamin Kidd has declared it to be 'the key to our times' (*Social Evolution*, 1894, p. 181). The human stream of both a civilized and a Christianized world is seen flowing, not now between narrow civic banks, but through broad altruistic plains; and as opposed to the towering worth of Universal Brotherhood, it is believed by many that thrones and theocracies, with their subordinate govern-

ments and priesthoods; democracies demanding the sway of the General Will in family, city, and empire; together with all other modifications of these, are moving towards extinction! The ultimate perfection of Man as an associate with man is seen rising above the horizons of the great future as an aggregated relationship of Brotherhood, which at last shall unite all mankind in one perfect family bond. And we cannot doubt that, imperfect as it is, this family basis for Universal Human unity rests upon a far loftier principle than the Social civic Ideals of the past have done.

But it is too often assumed that this ideal of human brotherhood derives its chief force in finally disposing mankind into a perfect world-society, from its being the ultimate ideal of Jesus' System for the summation of human well-being. We believe that this assumption cannot be maintained.

Jesus neither approved nor condemned Monarchies, Theocracies, Democracies, Oligarchies, Plutocracies, or any other system of human governance. He simply passed them by. In like manner He also passed away from Nationality, Sex, or Class. He did not find even the Family an essential to His system. These aggregates are indeed all taken up into His teaching, but only that He may make of them means of instruction and of reproof, of warning or of worship. They are simply fuel for His flame: straws sucked into the field of His irresistible motions. They are compelled to yield up what of worth they possess towards the furtherance of His own Ideal of Man; not a jot or tittle of them is allowed to pass

unfulfilled; but at the same time all of them become shadowy and decadent in His thought and purpose.

Now, the relation of Brotherhood is put along with these into the same category of human aggregations. It stands like all the rest, on a mere conventional basis. It is neither an Indestructible nor an Ultimate, in the universal system of things. Jesus Himself deliberately sets it aside as a bond of claim. His mother, brother, or sister are those only who do the will of His Father (Mark iii. 35). Brotherhood is simply one of the many relationships which become invalid at the grave, or perish when brought face to face with a state of man which aims to be eternal in its duration. Jesus aims at an Ideal state of Man which must, and shall be, as perfect in future time as it may be in eternity. He believes, though we sometimes cannot, that the Will of God shall be as perfectly done on Earth as it is now done in Heaven. For He postulates that God the Father *can* make His abode with man (John xiv. 23), and if this is possible, then eternity has nothing more to give to Time, nor has Heaven anything further to bestow upon the Earth which should render it more capable of developing an absolutely perfect existence for the human race.

Hence in the stern war with His age; in all the vicissitudes that menace His Person and Doctrine, Jesus never appeals to Brotherhood. Nor does He find in it either strength or comfort. He bases nothing on that foundation, and makes no direct reference to it as a bond which touches

Himself personally during His historic life. It is not until He has risen from the dead that the relationship of brotherhood finds a place in His thoughts. All through His pre-crucifixion period He never did or said anything because a man was His brother. He did it, or said it, because it was the Father's Will that He should so conduct Himself. The compelling motive in His entire career was Fatherhood, but never Brotherhood. The latter is a mere shadow in His thoughts. He speaks often of being Master, Teacher, Lord, and towards the close of His ministry, as being a Friend to His followers. But He is not an 'Adelphos,' a Brother, to any one till He says, 'Go tell My brethren' to the women who came to His sepulchre (Matt. xxviii. 10; John xx. 17). Doubtless, He represents Himself as saying at the Last Judgment, 'One of these My brethren'; but throughout His Life and Work upon the earth, His Life and Work are both 'finished' before He mentions this brotherhood to men in direct reference. In all His teaching, neither a World-Citizenship nor a World-Brotherhood; neither the ancient nor the modern expressions for a cosmo-socialism, enters into His conception of a Perfected Humanity.

There is a certainty, however, that just as the Ideal of all men being citizens in a Holy City descended from heaven, has wrought through the past to exalt the human mind somewhat nearer to the absolute Ideal of Jesus, so also the conception of the 'Brotherhood of Man' will play a similar mediatory part towards the same consum-

mation. But all such Ideals are doomed to end in the grave. They do not rest on the absolute, and can have no eternal permanence. In reality they have their origin and power among the nations, in the selfish assumptions of men that thereby a World-advantage and a World-happiness will be secured for all mankind.

The life and death of Jesus prove beyond all cavil that no aim and no purpose rising out of the bosom of man can yield him, here or Hereafter, a motive for permanently perfecting his existence, either as an individual or as an aggregation of individuals, save that one which He unfailingly set before Himself, viz. to do as a child the will of the Father, and to finish His work. It is for this reason that He constantly urges men to find the high unity and perfection of their being, not in sentimental relationships and selfish ambitions, but in practical loving service to another than themselves—service that may become self-abasing bond-service, and even self-imposed slavery. He that would be greatest must be the servant of the least. This done,—and because it is doing the Father's will,—this alone can constitute a basis for human relationship of eternal endurance.

His reason seems clear when we remember that only one relationship can be eternally permanent to man, that, viz. of the child to the Father. Dives was 'lost' and 'dead' in Hades, but he was still a 'son.' It is the sole and only unit-relationship, and it is the only one which is unchangeable and absolute, resting directly on the indestructible Father-Life. A man can be a servant, master,

lord, friend, or brother, to many, but he can only be child to one. Jesus regards all human relationships, parenthood included, as purely medial to, and reflective of, the eternal relationship of the Father-God to His child. Hence, He shunned every name for Himself, as far as it was possible, which seemed to relate Himself to anything in earth or heaven, save the Father-God. All other relationships were, to Him, fragmentary, conventional, and more or less untrue. He does not say, 'I am God'; nor yet, 'I am man'; neither does He include Himself in the prayer 'Our Father.' He never directly suggests any relationship for Himself, except perhaps in the name 'Son of Man'; and all the scholars of repute seem to be unable to come to any definite agreement as to its actual meaning. But if we interpret Jesus by the usual light and height of His thought as well as by the measure given in the content of His usual word, it is clear that both ideas of sex and masculinity must be eliminated from this title. For He disowns *any* relationship to man on a basis of sex (Mark iii. 33). Therefore, the meaning of both 'son' and 'man' resolve themselves into that given by 'child.' But even this idea He leaves indefinite, as connecting Him directly with humankind through sex-relations, *for He never acknowledges His life to be from Man.* It is from the Father (John v. 26; vi. 57). On the other hand, God, as God, is never connoted with His Sonship, but only as with the Father.

It is difficult, therefore, to find any substantive ground for the idea of *the Brother* in the system

of Jesus. But the conception of God as being His Father is undoubtedly, with Jesus, one of absolute relationship, and it is only through the idea of the Child that it can be reached. Consequently, THE CHILD IDEAL, as a permanent relationship in time or in eternity, is to Jesus the Ultimate one. His own personality, as well as His own standard of perfection, is, to His own convictions, true and eternal in as far as He is conscious of having realized in His own being this absolute relationship.

To maintain the relationship of the Child, therefore, and not merely to be the Brother, is the objective of all Jesus' teaching. Brotherhood, as we have said, rests on artificial and not on natural conceptions. For brotherhood is not a relationship which is based on the direct gift of life, as that of the child is, any more than one tree is related to another tree because both have sprung from the same Mother-Earth. It is an artificial relationship analogous to that of patriotism, or race-relationship, and is of no absolute permanence, though one doubtless of stronger sentimental texture than many others. No life-current flows between brothers as between father and child, and it is always and only upon the Life-Basis which Jesus builds either for time or for eternity. It is there He builds His Ecclesia, His Church, and consequently, His Ideal World of perfected Man.

Jesus' Ideal of Man, as an universal world-progression, is thus not summed up on the foundations of Citizenships, Parliaments, Federations, or Brotherhoods. These are great; but desirable as

they may be, and even necessary for time and times, we do not think that such a spirit as Jesus possessed would have agonized unto blood and tears to preserve them. He aimed at infinite things for Man. He struggled to realize upon the earth that imperishable relationship of man with man which He Himself had realized with the Father-God. This was indeed worthy of such a passion, and renders Gethsemane intelligible to us. For the Father and Son were one there in resultant purpose, though divergent in the means of attaining it. Oneness was conserved by drinking the 'Cup,' not in passing it by. It is, consequently, a relationship which cannot be put into civic, political, commercial, or family terms. It can only stand in terms of personality. The Human Race will fail in its attainment of that perfection which Jesus desired for it, unless, as He phrased it, 'they may all be one, even AS THOU, FATHER, ART IN ME.' This is the grand apex of all conceptions of human combination. Not as a citizen of a Holy City; not as a pardoned sinner by a Judge 'satisfied' of His broken law; not as one in a world-federation; nor as a brother in a human world-family; *but as one with the other as the Father-God is in Jesus*. We must regard all other combinations of men, either as dreamed of in the past, or as idealized for the future, as mere incidents in the development of Jesus' realization for Man. 'That they may be perfected into one.' 'That they may be one, even as We are one.'

Translated into actual practice, this ideal of a

perfect human race would perhaps express itself in the vast aggregate of humanity as Jesus Himself realised it in His life and work. He was Father to men because He fulfilled the function of life-giving to them. Not that He originated life. This the Father in heaven alone could do. But the words He spake to men were spirit and life, and His profession and promise is that, by believing in Him, men receive a continual contribution of life, amounting to everlastingness of life, even as the original life in the wheat-grain receives a similar everlastingness by falling into the ground and dying. Men, by continually abiding in Him, receive a continuous contribution of life from Him, even as the branch by abiding in the vine also enters into an everlasting life, drawn from the inexhaustible reservoir of Nature. This Father-reservoir of life, then, flowing through Jesus to the world, is also to flow through every man to every man, until all men become like the Father and Jesus, in contributing to each other, continuous contributions of the life they have received, in satisfying those daily and hourly calls for more life which are clamant through the bodies, minds, and spirits of all men. This life-contribution is not to be compelled, but voluntarily 'laid down,' even unto the all of life, just as Jesus exemplified it in His own work, and to be in harmony with the free gift of All-Life which the Father-God has surrendered to all.

But men are not only to be like the Father to men, in full surrender of life; they are also, like Jesus, in thus receiving life from Him and them,

to be true children to each other, to Him, and to the Father of all. As children, they render an absolute submission of will through that love which rises out of, and over, the life so given by the Father-God, by Jesus, and by all to all. In this way, each man in the human race would stand to every other one in it, as true father, and as true child; and it is evident that this is the true relation which existed, and does yet exist between the Father-God and Jesus. 'As Thou, Father, art in Me.' The Father is Himself Child in Jesus, Jesus the Child is also the Father, for He gives life, and He seeks that all men should be in all men, as the Father is in Him, and as He is in the Father. 'That they may be one, even as We are one.'

We should, therefore, understand Jesus as teaching us to pray 'Our Father,' not because we are brothers, but because we are each the Father's child. He never urges men to be 'brothers.' But He does urge them so to act that they may be 'sons,' or 'children' of their Father who is in heaven (Matt. v. 45). There is, in truth, no other in actual existence, all other relationships so-called being but reflections or semblances of this eternal one. And it can be said that, only in this one relationship can man and the Universe alike find perfection, and the indestructible guarantee of that perfection in their future being and well-being.

The Ascent of Man to the perfection of the Father is thus the Vision of Man in the soul of Jesus. The future, on the far-stretching wings of the aeons, is slowly drawing nigher bearing this

crowning result of Time in its bosom. The Spirit of Jesus broods over the chaotic waters of the centuries to encompass this creation now and from henceforth. Without doubt, the vast powers both within and without the Church (and perhaps in these days more without than within) are in motion under His guiding hand to contribute to this great work. Neither have the ideals and influences of the Past been in vain, though doomed to extinction in the coming time. Swallowed up in His wider and deeper tide, these currents, flowing out of ancient Hebrew Prophet and Grecian Philosopher, still heave and fall among many others towards accomplishing universal unity. The greatest minds of Early and Later Christendom believed that this consummation was only possible through the establishment and strength of an Empire Church, just as Modern Altruism, with State Socialism as its political instrument, describes in Brotherhood-without-the-Church an equally deceptive Ideal and Agency. Both are fallacious. The human race can only realize its ascent to its highest ideal development through the same spirit and on the same path in which Jesus realized the glory of His ineffable Childhood, viz. through the spirit of the Father-God *in* man, and by a continual pursuing through man the ascent to His Father and our Father, to His God and our God.

There is in truth no other way consistent with the profound well-being of human nature. And it is on this common ground, ordained in the natural and therefore divine spirit of the child, that the 'Kingdom of God,' and the 'Church,'

must inevitably rise as one united and indissoluble Soul-State. For whosoever receives the spirit of the child receives Jesus, and whosoever receives Jesus receives His Father (Luke ix. 48). When all men have followed Jesus, the Child, to the Father-God, and His child-spirit has possessed every human being, then the true Ecclesia, the Church, the perfect Communion between the Universal Father and His universal Child, shall be 'finished' as the Perfect Work which Jesus came to do.

What this consummation implies in vast and fundamental changes yet to be effected in human society is, of course, the problem beside which all other problems are dwarfed. It seems, indeed, a barren ideal because of its apparent impossibilities. Contrasted with the present state of man, and all the divisive powers which govern his lot, the social, not to mention the spiritual, communion of men cannot be said to be more than emerging from its Glacial Period. The world bristles with arms; and caste, wealth, and knowledge put despairing deeps between men everywhere. Nevertheless, it is enough for the hope of the race that the foundations of a perfected humanity have been actually laid in the experience of the Child Jesus. And silently from the mass of the 'poor in spirit' the superstructure is being built, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

One thing seems assured to the seeing mind. The present systems of Ecclesiasticism, great and small, prove themselves inefficient to the high purposes of Jesus. Reduction, if not annihilation,

we believe, awaits them, as well as almost every principle and practice pervading general human conduct at the present day. 'Sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor,' is as yet an unknown principle in the 'business' of the world. The conception of 'Progress' in the minds of mankind is as yet regarded as impossible apart from 'self-interest.' Every Throne, and every Government on the Earth at present stands on blood shed in hate. 'Give up all, even personality if need be, for the well-being of thy fellow, and to be like the Father in heaven,' is a doctrine not yet preached in any church. The spirit of the child is also deemed yet inferior to the spirit of the man; and strength, success, honour, power, and knowledge, are exalted above that poverty which receives the kingdom of heaven, that meekness which is to heir the earth, and that purity which is to see God. In universal practice, the universal judgment condemns as absurd, and as a total reversal of what is wise, that any person or nation should not only put forth as much energy and enthusiasm in the furtherance of the other as in benefiting self, but should in the same cause surrender the self itself to accomplish it.

Yet it is precisely this thing that Jesus did. We do not, of course, point these matters out in order to emphasize human shortcomings, but once more to show that, apart from Him, no man and no nation ever finds the true path for an ultimate well-being. But while doing so, we are inevitably forced to the verge of that wide gulf which still yawns between the Life of Jesus

and the life which the Historic Church is yet content to follow. Strictly considered, the problem for the universal Church of to-day is not so much to decrease the contradiction which exists between the Spirit of the World and the Spirit of Jesus, but rather, with all her energies, to destroy the divisions which gape between the Spirit of Jesus and the Spirit in the Church. If we may presume to prophesy, the true Armageddon of the future will not be fought between the contending forces of Christendom and the Heathen World, or between the Christian Religion and the other great Religions of the earth, but between Christendom and her Master. For, at root, the Hebraic Ideals on which, for the most part, Christendom at present rests, as an ecclesiastical structure and as a life-embodiment of universal religion, are, we are convinced, more widely alien from the Spirit of Jesus than is that Spirit of Humanity out of which Heathendom has risen. *Division among the Churches is but the final product of a divided conception of God.* In His own human experience, Jesus always found Himself nearer in soul and sympathetic practice to the heathen Centurion and Syro-Phenician Woman than to the Jew and the Apostle, and gladly welcomed from the Heathen that all-essential Faith which He did not find in Israel. And as Christendom has accepted her spirit and ideals from St. Paul who gloried in being a 'Hebrew of the Hebrews,' and has walked with the Spirit of the Temple in preference to the Spirit of Humanity made perfect in Jesus, it is evident that the revolution which must yet be

effected in the Christian Church, in order that the Spirit of Jesus may be free to exalt mankind to His own plane of perfection, cannot be characterized as other than fundamental.

But although it yet lies far below the horizons of every-day life and practice, the world of the future must approach more and more to this unity of the Ideal of Jesus; and as we have tried to show, such unity is not to be found in a world-monarchy, nor in a world-republic, nor in a world-citizenship, nor even in a world-brotherhood, but in a Child-Soul-Society, if we dare venture a definition, a World-Kinderbund, a Child-Jesus-Race, made one in the communion bonds of the child Jesus' relationship. 'As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us.'

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